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TALES OF RAJPUT CHIVALRY

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*(Adapted and abridged from Tod's
Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan')*

(Reprint)

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THE LIFE OF JAMES TOD

James Tod was born in London in 1782. His father was an Englishman but his mother was American. Soon after his marriage which took place in New York in 1780, Tod's father came to India where, in partnership with his brother John, he became an indigo-planter at Mirzapur.

Tod's two maternal uncles were members of the Civil Service of the East India Company. It was through their influence that Tod secured a cadetship in the service of this Company in 1798 when he was only sixteen. In 1800 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and in 1813 to that of Captain. Between 1812 and 1817 Tod conducted surveys in Rajputana and Central India with the help of Indian surveyors and opened up these untrodden tracts.

In 1817 the British Government sent a large force to crush the Pindaris, a body of powerful freebooters who were the terror of Central India. The expedition succeeded, and credit for this was partly due to Tod. His valuable knowledge of the topography, of Central

India, gained in the course of the surveys, was utilised and was found very helpful by the commander of the British army employed against the Pindaris. In 1818 Tod was appointed Political Agent of Western Rajputana. He held the post till his retirement in 1822.

As Political Agent, Tod tried to improve the condition of the country which had suffered much, after the downfall of the Mughal Empire, from anarchy and the ravages of the Pindaris. He took a large part in the negotiations which resulted in the conclusion of treaties between the Rajput States and the British Government which was recognised by them as the paramount power. Tod grew very popular amongst the Rajputs, and he had often to act as arbitrator in tribal quarrels and in disputes between the Rana of Mewar and his subjects.

Tod had an inborn taste for the study of history and antiquities. In Rajputana he obtained an opportunity of indulging it, for the country which had been the scene of the prowess of the Hindus and the Muslims, offered a vast field for antiquarian and historical research. Tod decided to avail himself fully of this opportunity, and he read Indian languages with a Jain scholar named Yati

Gyanchandra whom he called his *guru* (master). He also employed a number of Indian scholars (*pandits*) to ransack manuscripts written in Indian dialects and in Sanskrit. He himself made extensive tours, saw with his own eyes well-known historical places, observed the manners and customs of the people and thus collected materials for a comprehensive history of the Rajputs.

Unfortunately his assiduity as a scholar laid him open to the charge of being a partisan of Rajput princes, especially those of Mewar and Marwar. His great popularity as a political officer, by a strange irony of fate, seemed to substantiate the charge. This was possibly the cause of his disagreement with the Government, which viewed his activities with suspicion, restricted his powers and associated other officers with him. Tod felt disgusted at the unjust attitude of the authorities and resigned in 1822.

He spent the rest of his life in England. In 1824 he was promoted to the rank of Major and in 1826 to that of Lieutenant-Colonel. His well-known book, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, was published between 1829 and 1832. The first volume was dedicated to King George the Fourth of England and the second to King William the Fourth. *Travels in Western India*

was published in 1839 after his death. Tod was for some time Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society to which he presented many books, coins and inscriptions. ✓

In 1826 Tod married the daughter of an eminent London surgeon. Two sons and a daughter were the issue of the marriage. In 1835 Tod settled in London, where he died suddenly in November of the same year.

The value of *The Annals* depends on the mass of material so laboriously collected by Tod during the period of about a quarter of a century which he spent in India. But the epics and ballads of Rajasthan on which he relied so much, are not always trustworthy. Further, Tod had not tapped exhaustively the Persian sources for Rajput History. The arrangement of the material is also open to criticism—owing to the fact that the author had to deal simultaneously with the history of different tribes and different states for the same period. The style is at times loose and incoherent. Yet the charm of the work is obvious. The descriptions of heroic exploits are highly interesting. Picturesque passages are numerous, and the reader is struck with the vision of a splendid epoch of Indian History, which has passed away.

INTRODUCTION

Indian students are more or less familiar with tales of heroism from Europe. Whether legendary or historical, these are available to them in convenient and abridged forms. The exploits of Arthur and his Round Table, the adventures of Charlemagne and his paladins and the stories of the Crusades have reached the juvenile reader in India and have been read with rapt attention. But the great figures of Indian history have seldom been presented to him in an attractive setting. Tod's *Annals* is a storehouse of narratives of Rajput chivalry ; but to school-boys the book has always had a forbidding appearance. To attract their interest, it is necessary to give its stories form and symmetry, and to present them in a new garb. This is what has been attempted in the present volume.

India has been the meeting-place of two great peoples—the Hindus and the Muslims. Both are inheritors of old cultures and both were doers of glorious deeds. When the Muslims first came to India, there was naturally a period of warfare with the Hindus before the two peoples could settle down to a peaceful life. The tales in Tod have generally as their background this era of conflict in Rajputana, during

which both the communities produced heroes who can stand comparison with those of any other country in the world. Sanga and Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah, Hamir and Kumbha, Akbar and Pratap, Shah Jahan and Amar, Aurangzeb and Raj Singh would receive the homage of any great nation.

The Muslims were famous as conquerors, and at one time became the masters of almost the whole of Asia and parts of Europe and Africa. Their military system was highly efficient, and they could drill and discipline large forces and deploy them successfully on extensive battle-fronts. It was the concentrated attacks of their disciplined armies which distinguished their campaigns from battles fought by Rajputs, which were noted mostly for individual prowess. The Muslims were also quick to learn the use of gunpowder which was of great help to them in their military operations.

The Rajputs of mediaeval India were a small community little known to the outside world, but their heroism has become a household word in this country. The sterner and the milder virtues of man were equally prominent in the character of the Rajput warrior. Love of adventure, fidelity to the chief and courage that defied

the fear of death, combined in him with devotion to truth and an innate courtesy. Frank and generous to a fault, he was uncompromising and truculent when the honour of his race was at stake. The Rajputs offered the most stubborn resistance to external invasions against their native land, and long retained their independence in the hills and deserts of Western India. When Northern India gradually came under the influence of Muslim culture, the Rajput states were the guardians of old Indian beliefs, institutions, manners and customs. Traces of ancient Indian civilisation are still to be found in them.

The caste system was largely in vogue in mediaeval Rajasthan. Kings and soldiers belonged to the martial class (Kshattriyas), while priests and scholars were Brahmins. Menial work was done by Sudras, and agriculture was left to the aborigines. A Rajput king was the head of an important clan, as well as its supreme commander, and had under him a number of great military chiefs who followed him in war. These were the heads of the sub-clans, and received from the king grants of land for their services. The chiefs, in their turn, had as their subordinates captains who were the heads of the minor

divisions of the sub-clans, and who held land under them. Common soldiers were granted small plots by their captains whose standards they joined on the battle-field. This institution has been compared by many to the feudal system of Europe.

Every royal house had its palladium or the image of its protecting deity, which was frequently borne to the battle-field on the saddle-bow of the king. The royal banner was gorgeous and had armorial bearings such as the dagger, the lion rampant and the golden sun. Every superior chief too had a banner, and he was entitled to display it, when he appeared in public, along with kettle-drums preceded by heralds and silver maces borne by vassals.

As warriors, the Rajputs had the custom of worshipping the sword and the horse. They swore "by the steel" and prostrated themselves before the buckler, the lance and the dagger (or the sword). A solemn ceremony was gone through when a young Rajput was initiated to a military career and presented with arms. There were traditional gods of war who were worshipped with customary formalities. It was believed that victory in war depended on their pleasure. Rajputs were desperate fighters, but they knew

little of strategy or of military science. Hunting was their favourite pastime, and the *Aheria* was the great hunting festival in Rajasthan.

Image-worship prevailed on a large scale in mediaeval Rajasthan. Some of the prominent Rajput clans were the worshippers of *Siva*, the successor of *Rudra*, the Vedic storm-god. *Siva* is a terror-inspiring deity, and his worship by a race of warriors was very natural. The Rana of Mewar was looked upon as his *Diwan* or vicerent. The worship of *Krishna* was introduced later and showed the milder side of the Rajput character, which was the outcome of their progress in civilisation. The temple at Nathdwar in Mewar was the home of the *Krishna* cult and is visited even now by crowds of pilgrims every year.

There were in Rajput courts annalists who kept records of contemporary incidents, *Bhats* or genealogists and *Charans* or bards who were the court-poets and composed songs to celebrate important events. Rajputs derived their knowledge of the history and traditions of their country mostly from these sources. But little was known to them of the art of writing scientific history. The bards also wrote poems of love, songs in praise of kings and stirring war-songs, and

recited them in royal audience-halls before large gatherings.

Respect for women was a remarkable feature of the Rajput character. To defend their honour was held a sacred duty, and Rajput kings often made heavy sacrifices to save them from dishonour. When defeated in battle, they did not hesitate to permit their womenfolk to escape captivity and insult by performing the terrible *johar*. Widows very often burnt themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands. "Places of great sacrifice" of this type (*Mahasati*) in Rajasthan were marked with tombs or mausoleums.

Of the Rajput states the most important were Mewar, Marwar, Amber, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Bundi and Kotah. By common consent, Mewar stood foremost amongst them and was regarded as their leader. Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* gives the history of the important Rajput states from the earliest times down to the period when they were linked through treaties with Great Britain. The present selection however consists only of a string of narratives from the annals of Mewar—once the glory of Rajasthan.

CHAPTER I

BAPPA RAWAL

Rama had two sons, Lava and Kusa. It is from Lava that the Sisodiyas claim descent. Lava is said to have built Lohkot, the modern Lahore, and to have resided there till one of his descendants, Kanaksen, moved to the peninsula of Saurashtra (Kathiawar) where he founded a city called Barnagar (144 A.D.). Valabhipura which lay to the west of modern Bhaunagar, later became the capital of his descendants of whom Siladitya was the last to rule over it.

There is a legend about this king, which traces his ancestry to the sun. Subhaga was a child-widow who lived in the house of her father, the Brahmin Devaditya. He taught her Sanskrit incantations, and one day she was repeating one to the sun when he suddenly appeared and embraced her. From this marriage were born twins, a boy and a girl. When the boy grew up, he was sent to school. He was worried about his parentage and in anger he threatened

his mother, so that she might disclose the secret. At this moment the sun appeared and gave the boy a pebble, with which it was sufficient to touch his companions in order to overcome them. With this pebble he slew the king of Saurashtra and seized his throne. Another legend connected with the name of Siladitya centres round a fountain at Valabhipura, dedicated to the sun. In times of war Siladitya used to stand by this fountain and call forth the seven-headed horse *Saptaswa* that drew the chariot of the sun-god. With his powerful assistance the king's victory was assured. But among the ministers of Siladitya was a wicked traitor who disclosed the secret of his strength to the enemy, who invaded Valabhipura (524 A.D.) and who were called "barbarians." Their leaders did not expect an easy victory and tried to find some means to prevent *Saptaswa* from responding to the summons of Siladitya. This was at last done by polluting the fountain with the blood of kine. In vain did Siladitya call; the fountain remained mute, for the charm had been broken. The king fell fighting and his capital was sacked. Thus disappeared the solar dynasty from Valabhipura.

After the heroic death of Siladitya, his weeping widows sacrificed themselves in the flames.

that consumed the remains of their lord. Queen Pushpavati however was absent from the capital ; she happened to be visiting the shrine of *Amba-Bhavani* to place on the altar a votive offering, since she was expecting the birth of a child. She was returning when she received the news which blasted all her future hopes, by depriving her of her lord and robbing her promised son of a crown. In her excessive grief she took refuge in a cave in the mountains, where her son was born, afterwards known as Goha, the cave-born.

Having confided the infant to a Brahmin lady of Barnagar named Kamalavati, and enjoining her to bring up the young prince as a Brahmin, but to marry him to a Rajput girl, she mounted the funeral pile to join her lord. The child was a source of perpetual uneasiness to his guardian. He associated with Rajput children, killing birds and hunting wild animals, and at the age of eleven was totally unmanageable: to use the words of the legend, " How should they hide the ray of the sun ? "

When he was older, he frequented the forests of Idar in company with the Bhils, whose habits better suited his daring nature than those of the Brahmins. Finally he was chosen by

the Bhils to be their king, and founded a royal line that continued for eight generations. When the line was eventually overthrown, the infant Bappa, son of Nagaditya, the late king, was conveyed to the fortress of Bhandar, whence he was later removed, for greater security, to the wilds of Parasar, where rose high the three-peaked mountain at the base of which was the town of Nagda, an abode of Brahmins who worshipped Siva. The most antique temples are to be seen in these spots, within the dark gorge of the mountain and on its rugged summit, in the depths of the forests and at the sources of the streams, where sites of seclusion, beauty and sublimity alternately exalt the mind.

Here Bappa grew up, winning the title of 'mountain-lord.' Prince-like he strode across the fields, driving the holy herd of cows belonging to a temple. In sportive mood he joined the village festivities. One day he came upon the girls and boys all swinging under the trees. But more rope was needed, and they called Bappa. "First come and play the marriage-game with me," he cried. In frolic the village maidens linked their *saris* to the garment of Bappa and 'joining hands with his as the connecting link,' they danced round an aged tree. When the angry

parents discovered all their six hundred daughters to be indeed married to Bappa, the rash youth was obliged to leave the country.

There is another legend about the early life of Bappa. While he pastured the sacred cows in the wilds of Parasar, the prince was suspected of appropriating the milk of a favourite cow to his own use. He was distrusted and watched, and although indignant, the youth admitted that the Brahmins had reason to suspect him, from the habitual dryness of the brown cow when she entered the pens at eve. He himself watched and traced her to a narrow dell, when he beheld her pour forth her milk at a hidden shrine of Siva, where an ancient sage dwelt. Bappa related to the sage all he knew of himself, received his blessing and retired. But he went daily to visit him, wash his feet, carry milk to him and gather such wild flowers as were acceptable offerings to the god. In return he received lessons in morality and was initiated into the mysterious rites of the deity. From the hands of his consort Bappa obtained the lance, bow, quiver, arrows, shield and sword that made him afterwards invincible. When the sage left this world and ascended to heaven, he called Bappa to receive his blessing which made him invulnerable to weapons.

Blessed by another powerful hermit and endowed with superhuman strength and a double-edged sword, Bappa went forth to seek his fortune and win a kingdom. Chitor was at this period held by a Mori king of the Paramara race. Since Bappa's mother was a Paramara, his connection with the king obtained him a good reception. He was enrolled among the *Samantas* or chiefs, and a suitable estate was conferred upon him. Indeed the favour shewn to Bappa evoked the jealousy of the numerous nobility of Chitor. When a foreign foe appeared, instead of obeying the summons to attend and to fight for their king, they threw up their grants and tauntingly told him to call on his favourite.

Bappa accepted the challenge and undertook the conduct of the war, and the chiefs, though they had given up their estates, accompanied him from a feeling of shame. The foe was defeated and driven out of the country. But instead of returning to Chitor, Bappa, now flushed with victory, marched on Ghazni and after expelling its powerful ruler, Salim, placed on the throne a Rajput chief and returned with the discontented nobles. Bappa on this occasion is said to have married the daughter of the deposed king of Ghazni.

When Bappa returned from this victorious campaign, the nobles refused to re-enter Chitor ; instead they decided to revolt, and sent a message of defiance to their king. In vain did he send ambassadors to them ; their only reply was that as they had “ eaten his salt,” they would forbear their vengeance for twelve months. The noble deportment of Bappa had won their esteem and they transferred to him their service and homage. This tempting opportunity of seizing a crown caused Bappa to throw gratitude to the winds. The nobles now returned, and assaulted and took Chitor. In the words of the bard, “ Bappa took Chitor from the Mori and became himself the *mor* (crown) of the land.” He obtained by universal consent the titles of Sun of the Hindus (*Hindu-surya*), Preceptor of Princes (*Raj-guru*) and Universal Lord (*Chakravarti*). This was in the year 728 A.D. After many years of illustrious rule, Bappa is said to have abandoned his large family, consisting of about 98 children who were called *Agni-upasi Suryavamsi*, and set out on fresh conquests for Khorasan. Here he finally settled down and married new wives from among the conquered tribes, by whom also he had a large progeny. He died at the patriarchal age of one hundred. There is another tradition which states

that he overcame almost all the kings of the west—namely, those of Ispahan, Kandahar, Kashmir, Irak, Iran, Turan and Kafiristan. He is also believed to have married the daughters of the conquered kings and to have had one hundred and thirty sons. Each of these founded a tribe bearing the name of his mother. In his old age Bappa renounced the world and became an ascetic at the foot of Mount Meru where he was buried alive. The chronicles refer to a third legend according to which Bappa died a natural death in his new capital in the west, far away from the land of his birth, and his subjects quarrelled for the disposal of his body. Some wished the fire to consume it, while others wanted to commit it to the earth. But the pall being raised, while the dispute was raging, innumerable lotus flowers were found in place of his mortal remains. These were conveyed and planted in a lake. Thus Bappa passes from the stage of history, surrounded by the heroic glamour that clothed him from birth to death.

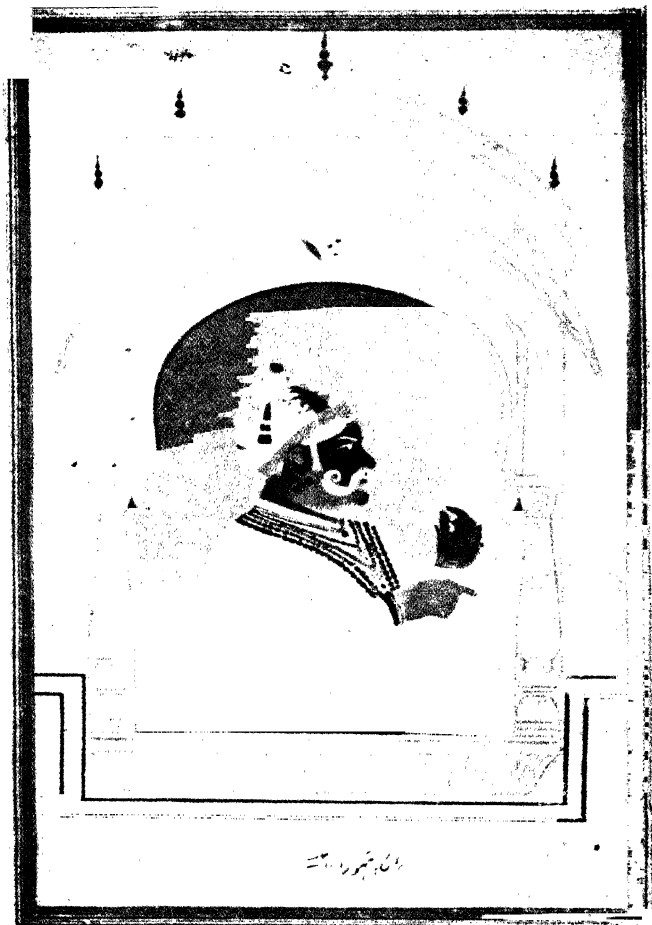
Between Bappa and Samar Singh there intervened a period of more than 400 years during which about 30 kings ruled in Mewar, the most important of whom were Khuman, Bhratribhat and

Saktikumar. During this period Mewar had from time to time to meet the invasions of Muslims who now began to pour into India from the west and who ultimately seized its sovereignty in the twelfth century. The name of Khuman became famous on account of the successful resistance he offered to one of these foreign invasions. The *Khuman Raesa* is a work which was composed during his reign. It describes the preparations made by him to meet the enemy and the battle that followed, and celebrates the names of the numerous Rajput kings who came to support him and to defend Chitor. The bard, in an animated strain, sings how on this critical occasion Khuman rejected the invaders' demand for tribute, how he gloriously defended the banner of Mewar against a violent assault and how finally he drove back the enemy, taking their general captive. Samar Singh, too, who ascended the throne of Chitor in the twelfth century, had to fight against Muslim invaders, though not in defence of Chitor.

CHAPTER II

SAMAR SINGH

Ananga Pal, the Tomara sovereign of Delhi, was the last of a dynasty of nineteen kings who had occupied its throne for nearly four hundred years. The Chauhans of Ajmer owed homage to Delhi at this time, and one of them, Someswar, helped Ananga Pal to preserve his supremacy against the attempts of Kanauj. As a reward for this service Someswar obtained the Tomara's daughter in marriage. The issue of this union was Prithwiraj who, when only eight years old, was proclaimed heir to the Delhi throne. Jaichand of Kanauj and Prithwiraj both stood in the same relationship to Ananga Pal, for the former's father Bijay Pal had also married a daughter of the Tomara. This originated the rivalry between the Chauhans and the Rathors, which ended in the destruction of both. When Prithwiraj mounted the throne of Delhi, Jaichand not only refused to acknowledge his supremacy, but set forth his own



PRITHWIRAJ

From an 18th century Rajput
painting of the Jaipur School

claims to this distinction. In this he was supported by the prince of Anhilwara Patan ; and in the warfare which followed, Kanauj and Patan had recourse to the dangerous expedient of inviting bands of Tartars, and thus the Sultan of Ghazni was enabled to take advantage of their internal broils.

Samar Singh, the ruler of Chitor, had married the sister of Prithwiraj ; and their personal character, as well as this tie, bound them to each other throughout all these commotions, until the last fatal battle on the Ghaggar. The first occasion of Samar Singh's aid being called in by the Chauhan king, was the discovery of buried treasure amounting to seven millions of gold—the deposit of ancient days. The kings of Kanauj and Patan, dreading the influence which such sinews of war would afford their antagonist, invited Shihabu-d-din to aid their designs of humiliating the Chauhan who in this emergency sent an embassy to Chitor. The style of address and the apparel of Samar Singh as described by the bard, shew that he had not laid aside the office and insignia of a Regent of *Mahadeva*. A simple necklace of the seeds of the lotus adorned his neck ; his hair was braided, and he was addressed as *Jogindra*, or chief of

ascetics. Samar proceeded to Delhi and it was arranged that he should oppose the army from Ghazni, while Prithwiraj marched against the king of Patan. Accordingly Samar Singh fought several indecisive battles which gave time to the Chauhan to finish the war in Gujarat and rejoin him. United, they completely discomfited the invaders, making their leader prisoner. The king of Chitor declined any share of the discovered treasure, but allowed his chiefs to accept the gifts offered by the Chauhan.

In 1192 A.D. Samar Singh was again constrained to use his buckler in defence of Delhi and its monarch against another Tartar invasion. Jealousy and revenge rendered the kings of Kanauj and Patan and the minor rulers indifferent spectators of a contest destined to overthrow them all.

In the planning of the campaign and of the march towards the Ghaggar to meet the foe, Samar was consulted, and his opinions are recorded in the annals. He is represented there as the Ulysses of the host, brave and cool in fight ; wise and eloquent in council ; pious and decorous on all occasions ; beloved by his own chiefs and revered by the vassals of the Chauhan. On the line of march no augur or bard can

better explain the omens, none in the field better dispose the squadrons for battle, none guide his steed or use his lance with more address. His tent is the principal resort of the leaders after the march or in the intervals of battles, and they are delighted by his eloquence and instructed by his knowledge.

The Muslim forces from Ghazni were met at the river Ghaggar. On the last of three days' desperate fighting, Samar Singh was slain, together with his son Kalyan and thirteen thousand of his household troops and most renowned chieftains. His beloved Pritha, on hearing the fatal issue—her husband slain, her brother Prithwiraj captive, the heroes of Delhi and Chitor “asleep on the banks of the Ghaggar in the wave of the steel—” joined her lord through the flame. Soon afterwards, the Tartars advanced on Delhi which was carried by storm. The capture of Delhi and its monarch and the death of his ally of Chitor, with the bravest and best of their troops, speedily ensured the further and final success of the Tartar arms; and when Kanauj fell and the traitor to his country met his fate in the waves of the Ganges, none was left to contend with Shihabu-d-din for the possession of the regal seat of the Chauhan.

A period of fierce warfare now began in North India, which lasted through ages and during which whole kingdoms were swept away. The Rajput, with a spirit of constancy and enduring courage, seized every opportunity to turn upon the invaders. By his perseverance and valour he wore out entire dynasties of foes, alternately yielding to his fate, and restricting the circle of conquest. Every road in Rajasthan was moistened with blood. But it was of no avail ; fresh supplies were ever pouring in, and dynasty succeeded dynasty. In these desperate conflicts, entire tribes disappeared, whose names are the only memento of their former existence and celebrity.

What nation on earth would have maintained the semblance of civilization, the spirit or the customs of their forefathers, during so many centuries of overwhelming depression, but one of such singular character as the Rajputs ? Though ardent and reckless, they could, when required, subside into forbearance and apparent apathy and reserve themselves for the opportunity of revenge. Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every injury power can inflict or human nature sustain. Bent to the

earth, they rose buoyant from the pressure and made calamity a whet-stone to courage.

How did the Britons at once sink under the Romans, and in vain strive to save their groves, their Druids and their altars from destruction ! To the Saxons they alike succumbed, the Saxons again to the Danes, and this mixed breed to the Normans. The kingdom ' was lost and gained by a single battle,' and the laws and the religion of the conquerors easily absorbed those of the conquered. Contrast with these the Rajputs ; not an iota of their religion or customs have they lost, though many a foot of land.

Some of their states have been expunged from the map of India and, as a punishment of national infidelity, the pride of the Rathor and the glory of the Chalukya, the overgrown Kanauj and the gorgeous Anhilwara are forgotten. Mewar alone, the bulwark of liberty, never compromised her honour for her safety, and still retains her ancient boundaries. Since the brave Samar Singh gave up his life, the blood of her princes has flowed in copious streams for the maintenance of their honour, religion and independence.

Samar had several sons. The eldest having died in the great battle on the banks of the

Ghaggar, Karna succeeded to the throne of Chitor. As he was a minor, his mother Karma-devi ruled the kingdom for many years on his behalf. She was brave and warlike and gave battle in person to Kutbu-d-din.

Karna's son was indolent and unfit for the throne. He left his father and his native land and went to live with his maternal grandfather. On Karna's death, his throne was usurped by his daughter's son, a Chauhan chief. This was unbearable to the Ghelotes of Mewar, who secretly invited Rahup, a descendant of Surajmall, the brother of Samar Singh. Rahup had been living in Sind as a chieftain under a Muslim ruler. He readily responded to the call of his clan, proceeded to Mewar, drove out the Chauhan usurper and, by occupying the throne of Chitor, restored the rule of the Ghelotes. He repulsed a great foreign invasion, but he is chiefly remembered for one thing, *viz.*, the change of the title of his clan from Ghelote to Sisodiya and that of its ruler from Rawal to Rana.

From Rahup to Lachhman Singh as many as nine Ranas ruled in Mewar during the short space of about 50 years. Of these nine, six fell in battle. Some of the battles were fought

against Muslim invaders, the most powerful of whom was Alau-d-din whose operations against Chitor read more like romance than history.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST STORM OF CHITOR

Lachhman Singh succeeded to the throne of Chitor in 1275 A.D. His reign is a memorable era in the annals of Mewar, when Chitor was stormed by Sultan Alau-d-din. It was twice attacked by him. In the first attack it escaped capture, though at the price of its best defenders. In that which followed, it fell.

The choicest heroes of Chitor met the first assault. With two young princes, Gora and Badal, at their head and animated by the noblest ideals, they fought valiantly, and laid down their lives, and few were the survivors of this slaughter of the flower of Mewar. For a time Alau-d-din was frustrated; and the havoc they had made in his ranks, together with the dread of their determined resistance, obliged him to desist from his attempt.

The assault is described with great animation by one of the old bards. Badal was only twelve, but the Rajput expects wonders even from a boy of his age. He performed prodigies of valour and was wounded, but Gora was slain.

A dialogue ensues in the annals between him and the widow of his uncle Gora. She asks him to relate how her lord conducted himself. Badal replies, "He was the reaper of the harvest of battle ; I followed his steps as the humble gleaner of his sword. On the gory bed of honour he laid him down, and sleeps surrounded by the foe." Again she says, "Tell me, Badal, how did my love behave ?"—"Oh ! mother, how further describe his deeds, when he left no foe to dread or admire him ?" She smiles farewell to the boy and adding, "My lord will chide my delay," springs into the flame.

In 1290 A.D. Alau-d-din, having recruited his strength, returned to his object, Chitor. The Rajputs had not yet recovered from the loss of so many valiant men who had sacrificed themselves in the last battle. Alau-d-din pressed his attacks more closely, and at length obtained the hill at the southern point where he entrenched himself. The bard has found in the disastrous issue of the siege admirable material for his song. He represents Rana Lachhman Singh, after an arduous day, stretched on his pallet and, during a night of watchful anxiety, pondering on the means by which he might preserve the life of one at least of his twelve sons. Suddenly a

voice broke on his solitude, exclaiming, " I am hungry (*Main bhunkhi hun*). " Raising his eyes, he saw by the dim light of the lamp, advancing between the granite columns of the palace, the majestic form of the guardian-goddess of Chitor. " Not satiated," exclaimed the Rana, " though eight thousand of my kin were of late an offering to thee ? " " I must have regal victims ; and if twelve who wear the diadem bleed not for Chitor, the land will pass from your line." This said, she vanished.

Next morning, he convened a council of his chiefs to whom he revealed the vision of the night, which they treated as the dream of disordered fancy. He commanded their attendance at midnight when again the form appeared and repeated the terms on which alone she might continue as their protecting goddess. " Though thousands of foes strew the earth, what are they to me ? On each day enthrone a prince. For three days let his decree be supreme ; on the fourth let him meet his foe and his fate. Then only may I remain."

The conditions were so congenial to the war-like spirit of the Rajput, that the gage was readily taken up. A generous contention now arose amongst the brave brothers. Who, it was asked, should be

the first victim ? Ari Singh urged his priority of birth. He was proclaimed, the umbrella was unfurled over his head and on the fourth day he surrendered his short-lived honours and his life. Ajai Singh, the next in birth, now prepared to follow. But he was the favourite son of his father ; and at his request Ajai consented to let his younger brothers precede him. Eleven had now fallen in turn, and but one more victim was wanting to ensure the salvation of the fort, when the Rana, calling his chiefs around him, said, " Now I devote myself for Chitor." But a terrible sacrifice was to precede this act of self-devotion in the performance of the *johar*, in which the women were immolated to preserve them from possible captivity. The funeral pyre was lighted within the ' great subterranean retreat,' in chambers impervious to the light of day, and the defenders of Chitor beheld the queen of Lachhman Singh and their wives and daughters, to the number of several thousands, moving in a procession towards the cavern.

A contest now arose between the Rana and his surviving son. But the father prevailed, and Ajai, in obedience to his commands, with a small band passed through the enemy's lines and reached Kelwara in safety.

The Rana, satisfied that his line was not extinct, now prepared to follow his brave sons. Calling around him his devoted clans for whom life had no longer any charms, he threw open the portals and descended to the plain. With a reckless despair they carried death, or met it, in the crowded ranks of Alau-d-din. The conqueror took possession of a lifeless capital strewn with the bodies of its brave defenders, the smoke yet issuing from the cavern where the ladies of Chitor had burnt themselves to ashes. Since this day the cavern has been held sacred. No eye has penetrated its gloom, and superstition has placed as its guardian a huge serpent whose "venomous breath" extinguishes the light which might guide intruders to "the place of sacrifice."

Thus fell, in 1290 A.D., this celebrated capital, in the round of conquests of Alau-d-din, one of the most vigorous and warlike sovereigns who have occupied the throne of Delhi.

Alau-d-din remained in Chitor for some days, admiring the grandeur of his conquest and the loveliness of its buildings. Later he delivered the city in charge to Maldev, the chief of Jalor, whom he had conquered and enrolled amongst his vassals.

CHAPTER IV

RANA HAMIR—THE RECOVERY OF CHITOR

The survivor of Chitor, Rana Ajai Singh, was now in security at Kelwara, a town situated in the heart of the Aravalli mountains, the western boundary of Mewar, to which its rulers have been indebted for twelve centuries of supremacy. Kelwara is at the highest part of one of its most extensive valleys, termed the Shero Nala, the richest district of this Alpine region. Guarded by faithful adherents, Ajai Singh prepared for the day when his line should avenge the terrible past. It was the last behest of his father that when he attained 'one hundred years,' the son of Ari Singh, the elder brother, should succeed him.

Hamir was this son, destined to redeem the promise of the protecting deity of Chitor and the lost honours of his race. His birth and early history fill many a page of their annals. One day before the fall of Chitor, his father, Ari Singh, was out on a hunting excursion with some young chiefs of the court; the party entered a field of maize, in pursuit of a boar,

when a girl offered to drive the game out. Pulling one of the stalks of maize, which grew to a height of ten or twelve feet, she pointed it, and mounting the platform, made to watch the corn, impaled the hog, dragged him before the hunters and departed. Though they were accustomed to feats of strength and heroism from the vigorous arms of their country-women, the act surprised them. They descended to the stream at hand and prepared the repast, as was usual, on the spot. The feast was held, and comments were passing on the fair arm which had transfixed the boar, when a ball of clay from a sling fractured a limb of the prince's steed. Looking in the direction whence it came, they observed the same damsel, from her elevated stand, preserving her fields from the attacks of the birds. But seeing the mischief she had occasioned, she descended to express her regret and then returned to her work. As they were proceeding homewards after the day's sport, they again encountered the damsel with a vessel of milk on her head and leading in either hand a young buffalo. It was proposed, in frolic, to overturn her milk, and one of the companions of the prince dashed rudely by her. Without being disconcerted, she drove one of the buffaloes towards the horse,

entangled the horse's legs and brought the rider to the ground. On inquiry the prince discovered that she was the daughter of a poor Rajput of the Chandano tribe. He returned the next day to the same quarter and sent for her father. He came and took his seat with perfect independence close to the prince, to the surprise and merriment of his companions, which was checked by Ari Singh asking for his daughter as his wife. They were yet more surprised when the demand was refused. The Rajput, on going home, told the more prudent mother who scolded him heartily, made him recall the refusal and seek the prince. He married the girl and Hamir was the issue of the marriage.

Hamir was but twelve years old when he was summoned to assist Rana Ajai Singh in his feud against a mountain chief named Munja Balaicha. Munja had already met Ajai in a personal encounter and wounded him in the head. Hamir set out, vowing that he would return successful or not at all. In a few days he was seen riding through the mountain pass, with Munja's head at his saddle-bow. Modestly placing his trophy at his uncle's feet, he cried, "Recognise the head of your foe." Rana Ajai perceived that this boy was destined to be a great king, and he marked

his forehead with a *tika* of blood from the head of Munja. Hamir succeeded his uncle in A.D. 1301, and had sixty-four years granted to him to redeem his country from the ruins of the past.

A Tartar garrison still occupied Chitor which Hamir was not yet strong enough to attack. He therefore commanded all who recognised his sovereignty either to quit their homes and retire with their families to the shelter of the hills on the eastern and western frontiers, or share the fate of the public enemy. The roads were rendered dangerous for the Tartars by his followers who issued from their retreats in the Aravalli the security of which baffled pursuit, and ravaged the plains. Successive generations practised this destructive policy of laying waste the resources of their own country, and attacking their foes from this asylum as opportunity offered.

Maldev, the Hindu governor of Chitor, now sent a proposal of marriage to young Hamir. His advisers, fearing a trap, counselled him against accepting it; but Hamir was determined to seize any opportunity for regaining Chitor, and accepted it eagerly. He said, "My feet shall at least tread the rocky steps in which my ancestors have moved. A Rajput should always be prepared for reverses; one day to abandon

his abode covered with wounds and the next to re-ascend with the crown on his head." It was stipulated that only five hundred horse should form his suite. As he approached Chitor, he was met by the five sons of the governor, but he noticed that above the gate there was no wedding symbol. He was received in the ancient halls of his ancestors by the governor and his chiefs with folded hands. The bride was brought forth and presented by her father without any of the usual ceremonies. The knot of their garments tied and their hands united, Hamir and his wife were left alone. What was his amazement when he learnt that he had married a widow ! She had been wedded to a chief who had shortly afterwards been slain. At the time of her marriage she was very young, and she could not now recollect even his appearance. Hamir was comforted when he had proof of his bride's kindness and fidelity towards him, and even more so when she showed him how the marriage might lead to his recovery of Chitor.

He soon returned to Kelwara with his bride. In due course an infant was born to them, and they called him Kshetra Singh. On the pretext that the child was ill and should

be placed before the Shrine at Chitor, Hamir's wife asked her parents to invite her home. When she came back to the ancient fort, she succeeded in winning over the garrison to the allegiance of Hamir. The time was propitious, as the governor was away subduing his foes. Hamir who was close at hand, quickly forced an entrance into the city with his sword and accepted the oath of allegiance in the palace of his fathers. The ' standard of the sun ' once more gleamed over the walls of Chitor and was the signal to his adherents to return to their old homes from the hills and hiding-places. The valleys and the western highlands poured forth streams of men, while every chieftain rejoiced at the restoration of the line of Bappa. So powerful was this great national feeling and so skilfully did Hamir foster it and follow up his success, that he felt himself strong enough to march forth and meet Mahmud Khilji who had succeeded Alau-d-din as Sultan of Delhi. Maldev had himself carried the ill news of the loss of Chitor to him and he was advancing with a large army on Mewar. It was attacked and defeated by Hamir who took the Sultan captive and killed a son of Maldev in single combat. Mahmud was, however, soon set at liberty on his

surrendering some conquered territories and paying a large indemnity to Hamir.

Banbir, a son of Maldev, offered to serve Hamir who accepted the offer in spite of Maldev's treachery against Chitor, and generously assigned some districts for the maintenance of his family. As he made the grant, he remarked, "I have but taken back my own,—the rock moistened with the blood of my ancestors, the gift of the deity I adore, who will maintain me in it. Eat, serve and be faithful."

Hamir stood out as the one powerful Rajput king of his day. All the other ancient dynasties had been crushed and the contemporary princes of Rajasthan whose elevation was very recent, rejoiced to see an ancient family taking the lead ; they paid willing homage to Hamir and aided him with service whenever required. The ancestors of the present rulers of Marwar, Jaipur, Bundi and other states gladly obeyed the summons of the Rana of Chitor. Great as was the power of Mewar before the beginning of the Tartar invasions of India, it never surpassed the authority which this kingdom enjoyed during the two centuries following Hamir's recovery of Chitor. Though it was surrounded with Muslim states like Malwa, Gujarat and Delhi. it could successfully oppose

them all. Its power was so consolidated that it not only repelled invaders, but could even carry war abroad and leave the stamp of its might near the walls of Delhi.

A long period of prosperity began in Mewar with the restoration of Hamir. The Ranas became great patrons of art and were particularly lavish in encouraging architecture. Magnificent public works were inaugurated, when a single triumphal column cost almost the income of a whole kingdom. Even the petty chiefs had their monuments as well as the king, the ruins of which may yet be seen in the wilds of the Aravalli.

Hamir died full of years, leaving a name still honoured in Mewar as one of the wisest and most powerful of its rulers. He was succeeded by his son Kshetra Singh who was brave and warlike, but whose life was unfortunately cut short by a family broil.

CHAPTER V

THE QUARRELS OF THE RAJPUTS AND THE TRIUMPHS OF KUMBHA

Rana Lakha mounted the throne of Chitor in 1382 A.D. after the death of his father Kshetra Singh. His name is celebrated as a patron of art and a benefactor of his country. In his reign tin and silver mines were first discovered and worked in Mewar, and their riches were applied to rebuilding the palaces levelled during the storm of Chitor. He also excavated many reservoirs and lakes, and raised huge ramparts to dam their waters.

When Lakha was advanced in years, an offer of marriage with its symbol, the cocoanut, came from Ranmall, king of Marwar, proposing to give his daughter to Chunda, the eldest son of the Rana. When the embassy was announced, Chunda was absent, and the old Rana was seated in his chair of state surrounded by his court. The messenger was courteously received by Lakha who observed that Chunda would soon return and take the gage ; “ for,” added he, drawing his fingers

over his moustache, "I don't suppose you send such playthings to an old grey-beard like me." This little sally was of course applauded and repeated. But Chunda, offended at delicacy being sacrificed to wit, declined to accept the symbol which his father had even in jest supposed might be intended for him. As it could not be returned without gross insult to Ranmall, the old Rana, incensed at his son's obstinacy, agreed to accept it himself, provided Chunda would swear to renounce his birthright in the event of his having a son, and be to the child but "the first of his Rajputs." Chunda swore, and his father married the daughter of Ranmall.

Mokal Singh, the child of this marriage, was the son of Lakha's old age, and when he was but five years old, the Rana decided to engage in a war to expel the Muslims from the sacred territory of Gaya. It was not uncommon for kings in India to resign the throne on the approach of old age and by entering on a life of austerity and devotion, pilgrimage and charity, seek to make their peace with heaven and win forgiveness for the sins inevitably committed by all who wield the sceptre. But for those who undertook to defend a holy land, there was the promise of eternal bliss and exemption from rebirth.

Before starting out on his expedition from which he might not return, Lakha wished to secure his throne against civil strife. The subject of succession had never been re-opened, but now he sounded Chunda by asking what estates should be settled on Mokal. "The throne of Chitor," was the honest reply ; and to set suspicion at rest, he asked that the ceremony of installation should be performed before Lakha's departure.

Chunda was the first to pay homage and swear obedience and fidelity to his future sovereign, the young Mokal, reserving, as the recompense of his renunciation, the first place in the council, and stipulating that in all grants to the vassals of the crown, "his symbol (the lance), should be superadded to the autograph of the prince."

The sacrifice made by Chunda to the offended delicacy and filial respect was great, for he had all the qualities requisite for command. Brave, frank and skilful, Chunda conducted all public affairs after his father's death to the benefit of the minor and the state. The queen-mother, however, who now rightly regarded herself as the natural guardian of her infant's rights, felt discontented at her loss of power. She watched with a

jealous eye all his activities and artfully asserted that, under colour of directing state affairs, he was exercising absolute sovereignty. Chunda, knowing the purity of his own motives, made liberal allowance for maternal solicitude, but upbraiding her for her unjust suspicions, he went into retirement to the court of Mandu. His departure was the signal for the arrival of a flood of intriguing relatives of the queen-mother from Mandor, then the capital of Marwar. Her brother Jodha (who afterwards gave his name to Jodhpur), was the first and was soon followed by his father, Rao Ranmall, with numerous adherents who deemed the wild region of *Maru-desh* and its *rabri* or maize-porridge well exchanged for the fertile plains and wheaten bread of Mewar.

With his grandson on his knee, old Ranmall would sit on the throne of Bappa Rawal. When the child ran off to play, there sat Rao Ranmall with the royal umbrella over his head, as if he was the ruler of Chitor. Mokal Singh's Sisodiya nurse could not bear the sight and, being an important personage in the court, she dared to demand of the queen-mother whether she was going to allow her kin to defraud her own son of his rightful throne. Her words however only hastened the evil designs of Ranmall and his party. When the queen-mother

protested against Ranmall's action, he threatened the life of the little king. Her fears increased when she learnt of the murder of Raghudeva, the second brother of Chunda. He was a man of virtue, courage and manly beauty, and was justly popular. When it was discovered that Rao Ranmall had sent him a dress of honour, and while he was putting it on, had him foully murdered, people regarded Raghudeva as a martyr and worshipped his image in their homes. The mother of Mokai now repented of her harshness towards Chunda and begged him to come to the aid of her son. The generous Chunda forgave past insults and laid a plan for rescuing his step-brother from his designing relatives. When Chunda left Chitor, he had taken with him two hundred *Aherias* or huntsmen whose ancestors had served its rulers from ancient times. These men had left their families behind, and it was easy to make this an excuse for seeking permission to re-enter the fort. On entering Chitor, they applied for service under the keepers of the gates and were appointed, since it was thought that they would be more attached to the place than to the family of Lakha.

Mokai's mother was secretly advised by Chunda to arrange for the young king to come down from

the fort every day with a large retinue, to give feasts in the surrounding villages. Each day the feast was to be arranged in a still more distant village and on the night of the festival of Diwali, he was to hold it without fail in the village of Gosunda. Here Chunda intended to join him with his forces. The instructions were carefully followed ; and the feast was held at Gosunda as arranged. But though night was closing in, no Chunda had appeared. With heavy hearts the nurse, the family priest and those in the secret moved homewards, when suddenly forty horsemen passed them at a gallop, and at their head was Chunda in disguise, who by a secret sign paid homage, as he passed, to Mokal, his younger brother and sovereign. Chunda and his band reached the inner gate of Chitor unchecked. Here they were challenged, but replied that they were neighbouring chieftains who, hearing of the feast at Gosunda, had the honour to escort the king home. At first the story was believed ; but presently the main body, of which this was the advance guard, came up, and the treachery could no longer be concealed. Chunda unsheathed his sword and at his well-known shout, the hunters quickly rallied to the fray. Chunda himself was wounded, but the guards at the gates

were cut to pieces, and the usurping kinsfolk of the queen-mother were killed without mercy.

The end of Rao Ranmall was tragic. Intoxicated with wine and opium, he had heard nothing of the tumult outside. When he came to his senses, he found the enemy at the door of his room. With no arms but a brass vessel of ablution, he levelled to the earth several of his assailants, when a ball from a matchlock extended him on the floor.

His son and heir Jodha escaped, while Mandor, the capital of Marwar, was occupied by Chunda and his two sons. Jodha, in despair, went to seek shelter with Harbuji Sankhla, a noble of Marwar. Harbuji Sankhla, at once a soldier and a devotee, was one of those Rajput cavaliers, without fear and without reproach, whose life of celibacy and perilous adventure was mingled with the austere devotion of an ascetic ; by turns he aided with his lance the cause which he deemed worthy and extended an unbounded hospitality towards the stranger. This generosity had much reduced his resources when Jodha sought his protection. The prince brought with him a hundred and twenty followers and asked for the ' stranger's fare ; ' but unfortunately it was too late, as the food had all been distributed for the night. In this emergency, Harbuji recollected that there was a

kind of wood called *mujd*, used in dyeing, which among other things in the desert regions is resorted to in times of scarcity. A portion of this was bruised and boiled with some flour, sugar and spices, making altogether a palatable pottage ; and with a promise of better things in the morning, it was placed before Jodha and his followers who, after making a good repast, soon forgot their miseries in sleep. On waking, they stared at one another in amazement, for their moustache was dyed with their evening's meal. But the old chief who was not disposed to reveal his expedient, made the incident minister to their hopes by giving it a miraculous character and saying that "as the grey of age was thus changed into the tint of morn and hope, so would their fortunes become young, and Mandor again be theirs."

Jodha was buoyed up with hopes and, with Harbuji on his side, soon found himself strong enough to attempt the recovery of his capital. The sons of Chunda were taken by surprise ; the elder of them with many adherents was slain and the younger, deserted by the people of Mandor, trusted to the swiftness of his horse for escape, but being pursued, was overtaken and killed. Thus Jodha in his turn was revenged, but

‘the feud was not balanced.’ Two sons of Chitor had fallen for one chief of Mandor. Jodha however wisely reflected that his people had been the original aggressors in this case and that the power of Mewar was superior to his own, and he sued for peace.

Jodha afterwards removed his capital from Mandor and founded the great city of Jodhpur. He also laid the foundations of the later power of Marwar which afterwards extended from the valley of the Indus to within one hundred miles of the Jumna.

Who would imagine, after such deadly feuds between these rival states, that in the very next generation not only would these hostile acts be forgotten, but that the prince of Marwar would abjure ‘his turban and his bed’ till he had revenged the assassination of the king of Chitor and confirmed his young heir in his rights ? The annals of these states afford numerous instances of the same hasty, overbearing temperament, easily moved to strife and impatient for revenge. But when once this desire is satisfied, resentment subsides. A daughter of the offender, given in marriage to the family of the aggrieved party, banishes the memory of the wrong, and when the bard joins in the couplet the

names of those who were lately rivals, each smiles complacently as he hears his 'renown expand like the lotus,' and thus the feud is extinguished.

The occasion for Marwar to shew renewed friendship was not long delayed. Rana Mokal, who obtained the throne by Chunda's surrender of his birthright, had two uncles, Chacha and Mera, sons of Rana Kshetra Singh, the father of Lakha. Their mother was the daughter of a carpenter. They were treated kindly and given employment at the court. But they possessed no rank, the sons of chiefs of the second rank taking precedence of them ; and this made them sensitive and jealous. One day Rana Mokal was seated in a grove with his chiefs around him, when he innocently enquired about the name of a certain tree. One of the Chauhan chiefs who wished to humiliate the brothers, whispered to the Rana that he should ask his uncles, designing an insult to the " sons of the carpenter's daughter." In all simplicity Mokal turned to Chacha and said, " Uncle, what tree is this ? " No doubt the chiefs did not trouble to hide their relish at the coarse joke, and Chacha and Mera felt that they had been publicly insulted. On the same day, while the Rana sat

in prayer, counting his rosary, the treacherous brothers came upon him suddenly. One blow severed his arm from his body, and a second left him lifeless. Swiftly mounting their waiting horses, the uncles rode to Chitor, hoping to surprise the fort, but the gates were shut against them. They then retired to a stronghold near the frontier of Marwar.

It was at this crisis that Kumbha, the eldest of the three sons of Mokal, trusted to the friendship and good feeling of the king of Marwar and asked for his help ; and his confidence was well repaid. Jodha put his son at the head of a force, and the assassins were attacked and dislodged from their retreat. They now fled to the mountains encircling Udaipur, where they began to strengthen a fortress on one of the peaks. They had added to their crimes by carrying off the daughter of a Chauhan named Suja, and this led to their discovery and punishment. For Suja traced the miscreants to their fort and mixing with the workmen, found that the approaches to their hiding-place were capable of being scaled. He was returning to lay his complaint before his king, when he met on his way the cavalcade of Kumbha and the Rathor prince of Marwar. The distressed father, "covering his face,"

told the story of his own and his daughter's dishonour. The party encamped and waited till nightfall, when they started out to surprise the authors of so many evils. Having arrived at the base of the rock where the parapet was still low, they began the steep climb, aided by the thick foliage. The path was rugged and, to keep together, each grasped the clothing of the man next him. They had just reached a ledge of the rock when suddenly before them glared two ferocious eyes—a tigress was awaiting them. Suja who was leading the way, was undismayed; silently he squeezed the hand of the Rathor prince who followed and the latter, without a moment's hesitation, plunged his dagger in the animal's heart. Elated by what they regarded as a superb omen, the party soon reached the summit, when the minstrel slipped and fell, and his drum, bursting with a loud crash, awakened the daughter of Chacha. Her father quieted her fears by telling her that it was only the thunder and that their enemies were far away. Just at this moment the avenging forces rushed in, and Chacha and Mera were cut to pieces.

Kumbha succeeded to the throne in 1433. With Hamir's energy, Lakha's taste for the arts,



AN INTERIOR VIEW OF CHITOR WITH THE PILLAR OF VICTORY

a genius comprehensive as that of either and with better fortune than theirs, he succeeded in all his undertakings. In 1440 A.D. when his prosperity was at its height, the Sultans of Gujarat and Malwa formed an alliance against him, and at the head of powerful armies invaded Mewar. Kumbha met them with one hundred thousand men, horse and foot. He completely defeated them and carried captive to Chitor Mahmud, the Khilji Sultan of Malwa. After six months he was released not only without ransom, but with gifts;—an incident which illustrates the mixture of generosity and pride in the Rajput character. After this was erected the great triumphal pillar in Chitor, the inscriptions on which give details of this victory.

Kumbha was something of a poet, and also composed a commentary on the famous “ Divine Melodies ” in praise of *Krishna*. The religious side of his character was probably developed through his marriage with the beautiful but somewhat extraordinary princess Mirabai, renowned not only for her beauty but also for her romantic piety towards *Krishna* whom she regarded as her lord and addressed lovingly as *Giridharilal*. Her influence was widespread and her hymns are sung all over India to this day.

Kumbha mixed gallantry with warlike pursuits. He carried off the daughter of the chief of Jhalawar, who had been betrothed to the prince of Mandor. Naturally a feud arose, and the Rathor prince made many attempts to redeem his affianced bride. From his palace, when the atmosphere was clear after rain, he was distracted by the sight of the towers of Kamalmer and the light burning in the room of his beloved, while he sat in the gloom of the night, brooding over his sorrows. He interpreted the light as a signal from his betrothed who pined under the fate which gave her into the hands of Kumbha. He exhausted every resource to gain access to the princess, and once very nearly succeeded in a plan to reach her by a ladder placed against the palace wall. He had cut his way through a dense jungle of *jhal* trees, but at the last moment was prevented from attaining his object. The bards said of him: "Though he cut his way through the *jhal*, he could not reach his *Jhalani*."

Kumbha occupied the throne for about half a century. He had triumphed over the enemies of his race, fortified his country with thirty-two strongholds, embellished it with temples and, with its fame, he had exalted his own. But his career was closed by the foulest blot that ever disgraced

the annals of Mewar, for he was done to death by an assassin—that assassin, his son.

Uda was the name of the murderer. His reign is left a blank in the annals. In the five years of his rule, Mewar lost much of the greatness which his father had won for it. For, not being supported by his own chiefs, he tried to buy security by giving away some territory to Marwar and by allowing a subordinate chief to become an independent king in Abu. Finally he humbled himself before the Sultan of Delhi and offered him a daughter in marriage to obtain his support. “But heaven manifested its vengeance against the parricide.” He had scarcely quitted the divan on taking leave of the Sultan, when a flash of lightning struck him to the earth, whence he never arose.

CHAPTER VI

THE SONS OF RAIMALL

At the time of his father's death, Raimall, the younger son of Kumbha, was living in exile where he had been sent as a punishment for what his father deemed impertinent curiosity. Kumbha had won a victory over the Sultan of Delhi; and Raimall noticed that ever since this, his father, before he took a seat, thrice waved his sword in circles over his head and uttered some incantation. He enquired into the meaning of this strange action, and this was the cause of his banishment.

He succeeded to the throne on the death of Uda. The Delhi monarch was now induced by the sons of Uda to invade Mewar. He was also joined by Surajmall, a grandson of Rana Mokul. The chiefs were faithful to their legitimate king, and aided by his allies, Raimall, at the head of fifty-eight thousand horse and eleven thousand foot, gave battle to the enemy. The conflict was ferocious. "The streams ran blood," for the sons of Uda were brave as lions; but the Sultan of Delhi was completely routed.

Raimall had three sons celebrated in the annals of Rajasthan—Sanga, Prithwiraj and Jaimall. Unhappily the jealousy of the two younger brothers against the elder disturbed the peace of his reign, and Sanga left the kingdom just to save his life. Later Prithwiraj was exiled for turbulence, and the youngest, Jaimall, was slain in a disgraceful escapade. A sketch of the feuds in this royal family will present a good picture of the Rajput character and of the mode of life of Rajputs when their arms were not required against their country's foes. The adventures of Prithwiraj have become the epic of the people. When they assemble at the feast after a day's sport or, in a sultry evening, spread the carpet on the terrace to inhale the leaf or take a cup of *kusumbha*, a tale of Prithwiraj recited by the bard is the highest treat they can enjoy.

Sanga's courage was tempered by reflection, while Prithwiraj burnt with a perpetual thirst for action and often observed "that fate must have intended him to rule Mewar." The three brothers, with their uncle Surajmall, now a dependent of Raimall, were one day discussing their future, when Sanga observed that, though heir to the ten thousand towns

of Mewar, he would waive his claims and, like the Roman brothers, follow the omen which should be given by the priestess at Nahra Magra. They repaired to her abode. Prithwiraj and Jaimall entered first and seated themselves on a pallet: Sanga followed and took possession of the panther-hide of the prophetess; his uncle Surajmall knelt with one knee resting thereon. Scarcely had Prithwiraj disclosed their errand when the sibyl pointed to the panther-hide as the decisive omen of sovereignty to Sanga, with a portion to his uncle. The princes received the decree as did the twins of Rome. Prithwiraj drew his sword and would have falsified the omen by slaying Sanga, had not Surajmall stepped in and received the blow destined for him, while the prophetess fled from their fury. Surajmall and Prithwiraj were exhausted with wounds, and Sanga escaped with five sword-cuts and an arrow in his eye, which destroyed its sight for ever.

He fled for refuge to the house of a chieftain named Beeda who, when the prince arrived, was just setting out on a journey, his horse standing by him. Scarcely had he assisted the wounded heir of Mewar to alight, when Jaimall galloped up in pursuit. Beeda who regarded it as his sacred

duty to protect the guest who had taken refuge with him, gave up his life in defence of Sanga who meanwhile escaped.

Prithwiraj soon recovered from his wounds. Sanga, aware of his implacable enmity, resorted to many disguises. He was compelled to associate with goat-herds. Peasants turned him out of their houses, finding him too stupid to tend cattle. A few faithful Rajputs found him wandering in disguise, recognised him and provided him with arms and a horse. They all took service with the Paramara chief of Srinagar near Ajmer, with whom they made raids on the surrounding country.

One day, after much fighting, Sanga was lying asleep under a banian tree with a dagger under his head. A ray of the sun pierced the leaves of the tree and fell on Sanga's face. A snake uncoiled itself to enjoy the warmth of the sun and reared its crest over his head. A bird of omen had perched itself on the serpent's crest and was chirping aloud. A goat-herd, "versed in the language of the birds," saw this and understood him to be a prince. He bowed himself before Sanga who repelled his homage. The man however went to the Paramara chief and told him that he was being served by royalty, and the chief thereupon offered Sanga a daughter for his wife.

Sanga remained under his protection until he was called to the throne on the death of his father.

When Rana Raimall heard of the violent quarrel which had nearly deprived him of his heir, he banished Prithwiraj, telling him that he might live on his bravery and maintain himself by his sword. With but five horsemen, Prithwiraj quitted his father's palace and made for Godwar in western Mewar. The quarrels in the royal family, following the disastrous conclusion of the last reign, had paralysed the administration of the country; and the mountaineers of the Aravalli so little respected the garrison of Nadole, the chief town in Godwar, that they ventured down to the plains in their raids. One of the Minas, the aboriginal inhabitants of the hilly regions, who had been conquered by the Rajputs, had actually re-established himself as a petty king in the town of Narlai in the plains, and was even served by Rajputs.

Prithwiraj formed the plan of restoring order in Godwar without revealing his identity, in order to prove to his father that he had abilities and resources which were independent of his birth and position. He revealed his plan only to a merchant of Nadole, who had recognised the prince in spite

of his disguise, because he had to pledge one of his rings to him in order to buy food for himself and his five followers. At the advice of this merchant, who was called Ojha, Prithwiraj enlisted himself and his adherents among the followers of the Mina king. On the *Aheria* or 'hunter's festival,' the vassals had leave to rejoin their families. Prithwiraj also obtained leave and left the town as if to go home; but he turned back almost at once, and sending his five Rajputs to drive the Mina king from his palace, he himself awaited the result of the attack in ambush at the gate of the town. In a short time the Mina appeared on horseback, dashing out of the gate in full flight to the mountains for security. Prithwiraj pursued, overtook and slew him and then captured the town from his followers. In a short time, almost the whole province of Godwar fell into his power. He quickly restored order and appointed as its governors Ojha the merchant and a friendly Rajput chieftain.

Meanwhile his younger brother Jaimall had come to an untimely end. Rao Surthan, the chief of Tonk-Toda in Central India, had been expelled thence by Lila the Afghan, a chief under the Sultan of Malwa, and had occupied Badnor in Mewar. His beautiful daughter

Tara Bai, urged on by the misfortunes of her family and its former glory, had given up the dress and habits of her sex, and learnt to guide the war-horse and to shoot the arrow with unerring aim from its back, even while at speed. Jaimall wished to marry Tara Bai, and was told that the price of her hand was the recovery of Tonk-Toda. But he tried to claim the reward before he had earned it, and being discovered in a dishonourable attempt to carry off the fair Tara Bai, he was slain by the indignant father. When this happened, Sanga was in concealment and Prithwiraj had been banished, and Jaimall was in consequence looked to as the heir of Mewar. The Rana was incited to revenge but replied, with a magnanimity which deserves to be recorded, "that he who had thus dared to insult the honour of a father, and that father in distress, richly deserved his fate." And in proof of his disavowal of such a son, he bestowed on Rao Surthan the district of Badnor.

Prithwiraj had already begun to regain the confidence of his father by his success in Godwar ; and this tragedy led to his recall. He eagerly took up the gage disgraced by his brother. Tara Bai had already heard of his fame and was so attracted by his chivalrous conduct that, with

the permission of her father, she consented to be his wife on his simple promise that "he would restore Toda to them, or he was no true Rajput."

The day chosen for the exploit was the anniversary of the martyrdom of the sons of Ali. Prithwiraj picked 500 of his finest horsemen and accompanied by the fair Tara Bai who insisted on sharing his glory and his danger, reached Toda just as the bier containing the relics of the martyred brothers reached the square. The prince, Tara Bai and one chief left their cavalcade and joined the procession. As they passed beneath the balcony of the palace where the Afghan chief Lila was putting on his dress, preparatory to descending, Prithwiraj hurled his powerful lance and Tara Bai let fly a swift arrow at him with fatal effect and, before the crowd had recovered from the panic, the three had turned their horses and reached the gate. There however they were confronted by an elephant. But in a flash Tara Bai had drawn her scimitar and severed its trunk. As the creature dashed off in agony, the riders slipped through the gate, rejoined the cavalcade and attacked the followers of Lila. The Afghans met the onslaught bravely but fell before the Rajputs, and Toda was won. All Rajputs who loved adventure and glory now

gathered round Prithwiraj. " Their swords shone in the heavens and were dreaded on earth ; but they aided the defenceless."

Surajmall had hoped to profit by the quarrels among his nephews and had resolved not to belie the prophetess if a crown lay in his path ; for she had said that he would have a share in the kingdom. When Jaimall was killed and his brothers were in exile, and Raimall had no other son to look to as heir, his hopes increased. The return of Prithwiraj from exile exasperated Surajmall whose " vaulting ambition " persuaded him that the crown was his destiny, and who now plunged deep into treason to obtain it. He took as partner in his schemes Sarangdeo, another descendant of Lakha Rana, and they repaired to the Sultan of Malwa. With his aid they assailed the southern frontier of Mewar and rapidly possessed themselves of a wide tract of land, even making an attempt on Chitor. With the few troops at hand, Raimall descended to punish the rebels who met the attack on the river Gambhir. The Rana, fighting like a common soldier, had received two and twenty wounds and was nearly falling through faintness, when Prithwiraj joined him with one thousand fresh horse and turned the tide of the

battle. He engaged his uncle Surajmall whom he soon covered with wounds. Many had fallen on each side, but neither party would yield. When worn out, both sides retired from the field and bivouacked in sight of each other.

It will shew the manners and feelings so peculiar to Rajputs, to describe the meeting between the rival uncle and nephew, unique in the history of family feuds. After nightfall Prithwiraj visited his uncle whom he found in a small tent reclining on a pallet, having just had the barber to sew up his wounds. He rose and met his nephew with the customary formalities, as if nothing unusual had occurred. But the exertion caused some of the wounds to open afresh, when the following conversation ensued :

Prithwiraj: “ Well, uncle, how are your wounds ? ”

Surajmall: “ Quite healed, my child, since I have the pleasure of seeing you.”

Prithwiraj: “ But, uncle, I have not yet seen the Diwanji. I first ran to see you, and I am very hungry ; can you give me anything to eat ? ”

Dinner was soon served, and the extraordinary pair sat down and "ate off the same platter," nor did Prithwiraj hesitate to eat the 'pan' presented on his taking leave. The conversation ended thus:

Prithwiraj: "You and I will end our battle in the morning, uncle."

Surajmall: "Very well, child; come early."

They met next morning. During "four *gharis*, swords and lances were plied, and every tribe of Rajputs lost numbers that day." Sarangdeo bore the brunt of the conflict, receiving thirty-five wounds. But the rebels were defeated and fled, and Prithwiraj returned in triumph, though with seven wounds, to Chitor. Surajmall however did not relinquish his designs, and many personal encounters yet took place between the uncle and the nephew, the latter saying he would not let him retain even "as much land in Mewar as would cover a needle's point," and Suja retorting that "he would allow his nephew to redeem only as much as would suffice for him to lie upon." But Prithwiraj gave the rebels no rest, pursuing them from place to place. In the wilds of the mountains they formed a stockaded retreat of trunks of

the *dhao* trees which abound in Rajputana. Within this shelter, horses and men were crowded together. Suja and his coadjutor were talking by the night-fire on their desperate plight, when their conversation was checked by the rush and neighing of horses. Scarcely had the pretender exclaimed "This must be my nephew," when Prithwiraj dashed his steed through the barricade and entered with his troops. All was confusion, and the sword showered its blows indiscriminately. The young prince reached his uncle and dealt him a blow which would have levelled him, but for the support of Sarang-doe, who upbraided him, adding that "a buffet now was more than a score of wounds in former days," to which Suja rejoined, "only when dealt by my nephew's hand." Suja then demanded a parley. Calling on the prince to stop the combat, he continued: "If I am killed, it matters not—my children are Rajputs; they will scour the country to find support. But if you are slain, what will become of Chitor? My face will be blackened and my name cursed for ever."

The sword was sheathed, and as the uncle and the nephew embraced, the latter asked the former, "What were you about, uncle, when I came?" "Only talking nonsense, child, after dinner."

—“ But with me over your head, uncle, as a foe, how could you be so careless ? ” There was a small temple near the stockade, to which in the morning Prithwiraj requested his uncle to accompany him to sacrifice to the deity, but the blow of the preceding night prevented him. Sarangdeo was his proxy. One buffalo had been sacrificed and a goat was to follow, when the prince turned his sword on Sarangdeo. The combat was desperate. But Prithwiraj was the victor, and the head of the traitor was placed as an offering on the altar.

Surajmall now fled and he only stopped to fulfil his threat, “ that if he could not retain his lands, he would make them over to those stronger than the king.” He distributed them among Brahmins and bards, and quitted Mewar for ever. He founded the town of Deolia whence his son returned to give up his life in defence of Chitor against Bahadur Shah.

Another famous exploit of Prithwiraj was his capture of the Sultan of Malwa. One day he found the Rana conversing familiarly with an *ahdy* of the Sultan, and feeling offended at his father's condescension, expressed himself with some warmth. The Rana ironically replied, “ You are a mighty seizer of kings ; but for me, I desire to retain my lands.” Prithwiraj

abruptly retired and soon collected five thousand horse, with which he began to plunder Malwa. The Sultan, on hearing of this invasion, marched out from his capital Mandu hastily at the head of what troops he could collect. But the Rajput prince, instead of retiring, advanced rapidly and attacked the Sultan's camp while he was making a halt for refreshments on the march. Singling out the royal tent where the Sultan was surrounded by his ladies, Prithwiraj captured him and placed him beside himself on a swift camel. He warned the pursuers to follow peacefully, or he would put His Majesty to death, adding that he intended him no harm, and would soon set him at liberty. Having carried him direct to Chitor to his father's presence, he turned to the Rana, saying, "Send for your friend the *ahdy* and ask him who this is." The Sultan was detained for a month and was released with every demonstration of honour on payment of a ransom.

The end of Prithwiraj was tragic. His sister wrote to ask him to deliver her from the barbarous treatment of her husband, the Sirohi prince. He was an addict to drugs and opium and, when under their influence, would maltreat his wife, sometimes even leaving her under the bedstead to sleep on the floor. Prithwiraj instantly went off

and scaling the palace walls, entered the room where the wretched Pabhu Rao was sleeping. He placed a dagger at his throat, but his wife begged for his life. It was granted on condition that Pabhu humiliated himself before his wife by placing her shoes on his head and touching her feet. He complied and was forgiven. But his response to the generosity of Prithwiraj was to invite him to stay as a guest and then to send him away with a present of some poisoned sweets which speedily ended his life.

He was actually within sight of his home at Kamalmer when he stopped to refresh himself with the sweets ; he was at once taken ill and lay down at a wayside shrine, where he sent for Tara Bai to come and say farewell. But the poison worked so quickly that he was dead before she could descend from the citadel. Her resolution was soon formed ; the pyre was lit and she died in the flames with the body of the chivalrous Prithwiraj in her arms.

CHAPTER VII

RANA SANGA

Sangram Singh, better known in the annals of Mewar as Sanga, came to the throne in 1508 A.D., and under him Mewar reached the summit of her prosperity. To use the metaphor of the annals, he was the *kalas* on the pinnacle of her glory. After him we shall see this glory on the wane, and though many rays of splendour illumined her declining career, they served but to gild the ruin.

The imperial seat of Delhi was now shivered into pieces, and numerous petty thrones were constructed of its fragments. Mewar little dreaded these imperial puppets, when four kings reigned simultaneously between Delhi and Benares. The Sultans of Malwa, though in league with those of Gujarat, could make no impression on Mewar when Sanga led her heroes. Eighty thousand horse, seven Rajas of the highest rank (namely Raos) and one hundred and four chief tains bearing the titles of Rawat and Rawal, with

five hundred war elephants, followed him in the field. The kings of Marwar and Amber did him homage, and the Raos of Gwalior, Ajmer, Bundi and Abu served him as tributary chiefs or held their estates of him as their overlord.

Sanga did not forget those who had sheltered him in his adversity; the Paramara chief of Srinagar had a grant of Ajmer, and the title of Rao for his son Jagmall. In a short space of time, Sanga entirely allayed the disorders which had been brought about through the internal feuds of his family. It might be thought that there was something cowardly in his surrender of his birthright when he retired into hiding in favour of his younger brothers. But perhaps his action should rather be regarded as shewing foresight and a spirit of patriotic forbearance. Knowing his brothers as he did, he realised that any other course would have endangered the country as well as the safety of his family. Certainly the rest of his life was heroic enough, and his body was completely worn out ere he died.

Sanga carefully organised his forces which he always kept in the field and he was victorious in eighteen pitched battles against the Sultans of Dhei and Malwa. The Pilakhal (yellow rivulet)

near Bayana became the northern boundary of Mewar, and the Sind River the eastern ; on the south his domain touched Malwa, while his native hills were an impenetrable barrier to the west. Thus swaying directly or by influence the greater part of Rajasthan and adored by Rajputs for the possession of those qualities which they most admired, Sanga was ascending to the pinnacle of distinction ; and had not fresh hordes of Usbeks and Tartars from the prolific shores of the Oxus and the Jaxartes again poured down on the plains of Hindusthan, the crown of the *Chakravarti* might again have encircled the brow of a Hindu, and the banner of supremacy might have been transferred from Indra-prastha to the battlements of Chitor. But Babur arrived at the critical time to rally the followers of Islam, and to collect them around his victorious standard.

Babur was a Mughal, and his kingdom of Ferghana lay on both sides of the Jaxartes. He was a worthy antagonist of the Rajput Rana, for, like Sanga, he had been trained in the school of adversity and, like him, he tempered his romantic acts of personal heroism with that discretion which looks to results. In 1494 A.D. at the tender age of twelve, he succeeded to a kingdom ; ere-

best given in his own words, recorded in his memoirs :

“ On Monday, the 23rd of the first *Jemadi*, I had mounted to survey my posts, and in the course of my ride was seriously struck with the reflection that I had always resolved that, one time or another, I would make an effectual repentance, and that some traces of a hankering after the renunciation of forbidden deeds had ever remained in my heart. I said to myself,

‘ O, my soul,

How long wilt thou continue to take pleasure in sin ?
Repentance is not unpalatable—taste it.

How great has been thy defilement from sin !

How much pleasure didst thou take in despair !

How long hast thou been the slave of thy passions !

How much of thy life hast thou thrown away !

Since thou hast set out on a holy war,

Thou hast seen death before thine eyes for thy

salvation.

He who resolves to sacrifice his life to save himself

Shall attain that exalted state which thou knowest.

Keep thyself far away from all forbidden enjoyments .

Cleanse thyself from all thy sins.’

Having withdrawn myself from such temptation, I vowed never more to drink wine. Then having



BABUR
Dictating his memoirs

From a miniature of the Mogul
School, early 17th century.

sent for the gold and silver goblets and cups, with all the other utensils used in drinking parties, I directed them to be broken, and renounced the use of wine, purifying my mind. The fragments of the goblets and other utensils of gold and silver I directed to be divided among the dervishes and the poor. The first person who followed me in my repentance was Asas who also joined me in my resolution of ceasing to cut the beard and of allowing it to grow. That night and the following, numbers of *Amirs* and courtiers, soldiers and persons not in the army, to the number of nearly three hundred men, made vows of reformation. The wine which we had with us we poured on the ground; I ordered that the wine brought by Baba Dost should have salt thrown into it that it might be made into vinegar....At length, observing the universal discouragement of my troops and their total want of spirit, I formed my plan. I called an assembly of all the *Amirs* and officers, and thus addressed them: 'Noblemen and soldiers! every man that comes into the world is subject to dissolution. When we are passed away and gone, God only survives, unchangeable. Whoever comes to the feast of life must drink from the cup of death. He who arrives at the inn of mortality, must one day

inevitably take his departure from that house of sorrow, the world. How much better it is to die with honour than to live with infamy. The most high God has been propitious to us and has now placed us in such a crisis, that if we fall in the field, we die the death of martyrs. Let us then with one accord swear on God's Holy Word, that none of us will think of turning his face from this warfare, nor leave the battle and slaughter that ensues till his soul is separate from his body.' Master and servant, small and great, seizing the blessed *Koran* in their hands, swore as I asked them. My plan succeeded admirably and its effects were immediately visible, far and near, on friend and foe."

Babur seized this opportunity to break up his camp, to which he had been confined for nearly a month, and marched in order of battle to a position two miles in advance, the Rajputs meanwhile skirmishing up to his guns. The inactivity of Sanga in delaying so long to attack him, can scarcely escape censure. It may be that he thought he had his enemy in a trap, and that every day would increase Babur's danger. This reasoning might have been valid, had all the diverse elements of which his army was composed, been inspired by the same deep patriotism as himself.

But he ought to have known his countrymen, and realised that delay would give rein to their petty ambitions and prove fatal to this coalition against the enemy. Although Babur's memoirs do not mention this, the annals state that one of the Rajput chiefs was in treasonable negotiation with the Mughal Emperor and that this proved his salvation.

On the 16th of March the attack began by a furious onset on the centre and the right wing of the Mughals, and for several hours the conflict was tremendous. Devotion was never more manifest on the side of the Rajputs, as is proved by the long list of noble names among the slain. But the Mughal artillery made dreadful havoc in the ranks of the Rajput cavalry which could not force the entrenchments, nor reach the infantry which defended them. While the battle was still doubtful, the traitor chief mentioned above, who led the van, went over to Babur, and Sanga was obliged to retreat from the field which at the outset promised a glorious victory. He himself was severely wounded and the choicest of his chieftains were slain. The conqueror assumed the title of 'Ghazi' which was retained by his descendants.

Sanga retreated towards the hills of Mewar, having announced his fixed determination never to re-enter Chitor but with victory. Had his life been spared to his country, he might have redeemed his pledge ; but he died the same year, near the frontier of Mewar, not without suspicion of poison. It is painful to have to record that his ministers were said to have prompted the deed, and the motive was a disgraceful one ; they hoped by killing him to purchase inglorious ease and safety, which they preferred to privations and dangers. They had no desire to emulate their king who resolved to make the heavens his canopy till his foe was crushed—a determination which was pursued with the most resolute perseverance by some of his gallant successors.

Rana Sanga was of middle stature, but of great muscular strength ; fair in complexion, with unusually large eyes. At his death he was but the wreck of an old warrior, having lost one eye in the broil with his brother and an arm in a fight against the Lodi Sultan of Delhi. One of his legs was crippled by a cannon-ball and he counted eighty wounds on his body. He was celebrated for his energetic enterprise, an instance of which was the defeat he inflicted on the Sultan of Malwa, whose crown he preserved as a trophy of victory.

His conquest of the almost impregnable Ranthambhor, though ably defended by the imperial general Ali, gained him great renown. That Babur respected the courage of his foe, is proved by the fact that he did not make a second attack on him.

Ratna, Sanga's third son, who succeeded his father in 1527 A.D., had all the arrogance and martial virtues of his race. Like his father, he determined to make the field his capital and commanded that the gates of Chitor should never be closed. Had he lived long enough to temper by experience his youthful impetuosity, he would have been a worthy successor to Sanga as head of the league against the enemies of his country.

He had been secretly married to the daughter of Prithwiraj of Amber, probably before the death of his elder brothers made him heir to Sanga. His double-edged sword, the proxy of the Rajput cavalier, represented him at the ceremony. Unfortunately, the secret was kept all too well; for the Hara chief of Bundi, not knowing that she was already married, demanded and obtained her as his wife. The Rana was to blame, for he ought to have claimed his bride when he came to the throne. But his vanity was flattered by the secret engagement which he thought would prevent the acceptance of any

proposal for the hand of his betrothed. When Ratna failed to redeem the promise made through his proxy, the maiden saw no need of disclosing her secret or refusing the brave Hara chief of whom fame spoke loudly.

The unintentional insult sank deep into the heart of the Rana. And though the rulers of Bundi had long been attached to the Sisodiya house and Ratna himself had married the Hara's sister, he brooded on the means of revenge in the attainment of which he sacrificed his own life as well as that of his rival. The festival of the *Aheria* gave him his opportunity ; they fought, and each fell by the other's weapon. Ratna reigned for only five years, but he had the satisfaction of outliving the Emperor Babur without having to surrender an acre of the land of Mewar.

He was succeeded by his brother Bikramajit (1531 A.D.) who had all the turbulence of Ratna, without the redeeming qualities which endeared the latter to his subjects. Insolent, passionate and vindictive, he utterly neglected to pay his proud nobles the respect which they demanded. Instead of appearing at their head, he passed his time among wrestlers and prize-fighters ; on them and on a crowd of *paeks* or foot-soldiers he lavished

those gifts and that praise which the aristocratic Rajputs, the cavaliers of Rajasthan, claimed as their exclusive right. This led to open quarrels and flagrant disorder. The police were despised and cattle were carried off by the mountaineers from under the walls of Chitor. When the Rana ordered the cavaliers to go in pursuit of the robbers, he was tauntingly told to send his *paeks*.

Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat, determined to take advantage of the Rajput dissensions to avenge the disgrace of the defeat of his country at the hands of Kumbha and Sanga. Reinforced by the troops of Mandu, he marched against the Rana who was then encamped in the Bundi territory. Though the enemy's forces were overwhelming, yet with the high courage which belonged to his house, Bikramajit promptly gave battle. But he found his mercenary *paeks* unreliable, while his vassals and kinsmen not only kept aloof but marched off in a body to defend Chitor and Udai, the posthumous son of Sanga, who was still an infant.

There was a sanctity in the very name of Chitor, which from the earliest times, had drawn defenders to its aid. Such was the inexplicable loyalty of the Rajput that on this occasion

Baghji, the heir of Surajmall, now an old man, forgot the bitter feuds of the past and left Deolia to pour out his few remaining drops of blood in defence of the abode of his fathers. The king of Bundi with a brave band of five hundred Haras also came, and many other allies from all parts of Rajwara.

Bahadur's army was the largest ever put in the field by the Sultans of Central India. It soon left Bundi and laid siege to Chitor, as its defenders had apprehended. Bahadur is said to have brought to the attack artillery manned by Europeans. To the skill of his engineers he was indebted for the successful storm which followed. He sprang a mine which blew up forty-five cubits of the rampart with a bastion where the brave Haras were posted. The Rajputs bravely defended the breach and repelled many assaults ; and to set an example of devotion, the queen-mother Jawabir Bai, of the Rathor race, put on armour and headed a sally in which she was slain. Still the besiegers gained ground, and the last council was called to decide how to save the infant son of Sanga from the imminent peril. Chitor could only be defended by royalty, and again they had recourse to the expedient of crowning a king

as a sacrifice to its protecting goddess. Baghji accepted the honour which carried with it destruction. The banner of Mewar floated over him, and the golden sun against its sable field never shone more brightly than when the *changi* was raised amidst the shouts of the defenders over the head of the son of Surajmall. The little Udai, the youngest son of Rana Sanga, was placed in safety with Surthan, the ruler of Bundi, and the garrison put on their saffron robes, while preparations for the *johar* were being made with all haste. Karnavati, the mother of the little prince, led the procession of willing victims to their doom, and thirteen thousand women met their death together. Then the gates were thrown open and the Deolia chief at the head of the survivors rushed, with blind despair, on his fate.

This was the second storm of Chitor, which took place in 1534 A.D. Every clan lost its chief and the choicest of his retainers, and thirty-two thousand Rajputs were slain.

A fortnight later Bahadur had to retire on hearing that Humayun, the son and successor of Babur on the throne of Delhi, was advancing to aid the Rajputs. He had come all the way from Bengal at the appeal of Karnavati. Had he not been

so far away, this great tragedy might have been averted ; for he was bound by the laws of chivalry to come to the rescue of the widowed queen whose knight he had become when she sent him the *rakhi*.

The festival of the bracelet or *rakhi* falls in spring. It was the custom for a married lady to bestow the bracelet on a gallant noble whom she henceforth called her brother. He pledged himself to give her protection and to fight for her cause, but he probably never saw her face, nor was rewarded by a single smile. Such a relationship was always honoured as above scandal. The actual gift need not be costly, and might consist of a cord of twisted silk, though a rich lady might send a bracelet of gold and gems. In return the noble sent a blouse which might be of plain silk or satin or of gold brocade and pearls. This has often been accompanied by richer gifts consisting of anything up to a whole province.

When Humayun received the bracelet from Karnavati, he was so pleased at the courtesy which gave him the title of her brother, and uncle and protector to her infant son Udai Singh, that he pledged himself to her service. He proved himself a true knight and even abandoned his conquests in

Bengal when called upon to redeem his pledge and go to the help of Chitor. He expelled Bahadur's army from the fort and took Mandu by assault to punish its Sultan for the aid which he had given to Bahadur. Sending for Bikramajit, he invested him with a sword in the captured citadel.

Bikramajit, thus restored to his kingdom, had gained nothing by adversity. He renewed all his former insolence to his chiefs, and even so far forgot the reverence universally shewn to old age as to strike in open court the chief of Srinagar and Ajmer, the protector of his father Sanga in his misfortunes. The assembly rose with one accord at this insult to their order. As they retired, the first of the nobles exclaimed, "Hitherto, brother chiefs, we have had but a smell of the blossom, but now we shall be obliged to eat the fruit." To this the insulted chief added as he hastily retired, "To-morrow its flavour will be known."

On leaving their unworthy king, the nobles went to Banbir, the son of the heroic Prithwiraj, and offered to seat him on the throne of Chitor. He was loyal enough to refuse the invitation at first : but when the chiefs described the dangers

which threatened the country if its king did not enjoy their confidence, he finally consented. A deposed king seldom lives long, and the cries of the women mourning the death of Bikramajit soon followed the shouts of the nobles who saw the *changi* raised over the head of Banbir (1535 A.D.).



A RANA OF MEWAR
with the 'Changi'

From a Rajput painting of the
17th century, in the collection of
Mr. Ajit Ghose, Calcutta

CHAPTER VIII

UDAI AND THE FALL OF CHITOR

Once on the throne, Banbir Singh underwent a complete transformation. A few hours of sovereignty sufficed to smother the voice of conscience which had warned him against treachery to his king and the assumption of royal dignity. He breathed more freely as the 'compunctious visitings' disappeared and soon grew eager to render the throne of Mewar absolutely secure for himself.

Udai Singh, the lawful heir to the throne, was only six years old. Banbir feared that this boy might in future claim the crown and that the chiefs who were now his supporters might go over to him. His mind was at once made up and he only waited for the approach of night to remove with his own hand the obstacle to his ambition. A little after night-fall, Udai "went to sleep after his rice and milk." The palace was quiet after the festivities of the day which celebrated the accession of Banbir. But it was suddenly disturbed by a scream which alarmed the nurse Panna who was in charge of the boy in his bed-chamber, and a *Bari* who stepped in to

remove the remnant of the dinner, informed her of the cause, *viz.*, the assassination of Rana Bikramajit by Banbir. Suspecting the intentions of the latter and apprehending that he might now try to kill Udai, she grew anxious for his safety. She not only loved the boy as her own son who was of the same age, but was also devoted to the memory of Sanga, the perpetuation of whose line was now her chief concern. The *Bari* sympathised with her intentions and offered his help. She put her charge hastily into a fruit-basket and, covering it with leaves, delivered it to the *Bari* who at once escaped with it from the palace. Panna feared that Banbir would ransack the whole country if he had any suspicion of the removal of Udai, and would thus frustrate her plan. To avoid such suspicion, she decided to make the greatest sacrifice that a woman was capable of—a sacrifice that has immortalised her name. She quickly substituted her own son on the bed of the prince and covered him with bedsheets. Scarcely had she done it, when Banbir rushed into the chamber with a drawn sword in his hand and enquired for the prince. Panna's lips were automatically sealed and refused to part. But she realised that hesitation and faltering

meant danger to the descendant of Sanga and she pointed her finger, as in a trance, at the bed where her darling lay asleep. The murderer rushed towards him, and for a moment the mother's eyes closed, and when they re-opened, her boy lay lifeless in a pool of blood. The little victim to brutal ambition was consigned to the flames amidst the lamentation of relatives and friends, who thought that the line of Sanga was now extinct. Panna too wept with them, but none could know why her tears were shed.

The *Bari* had been instructed to wait for Panna in the dried-up bed of a river, a few miles to the west of Chitor. She wiped away her tears after the funeral and hastened to join him to remove the little prince out of harm's way. Happily the boy did not awake till they were quite out of the neighbourhood of Chitor. The two faithful servants took the child to two chiefs in succession, both belonging to the elder branch of the Sisodiyas, but neither dared give him shelter against Banbir. Each pleaded the danger that threatened him in case of disclosure. The prospects of saving Udai were not hopeful. But Panna had a ready wit which never failed her in the hour of danger. She took courage,

crossed the intricate valleys of the Aravalli with the help and under the protection of its wild inhabitants, the Bhils, and reached Kamalmer. She asked for an interview with its governor named Asa Sah who was not a Rajput of the warrior class, but a Vaishya by caste, following the teachings of Jainism. The interview being granted, she placed the infant on his lap, told the whole story and requested him to "guard the life of his sovereign." He felt perplexed and alarmed, but his aged mother rebuked him for his scruples. "Fidelity," said she, "never looks at dangers or difficulties. He is your master, the son of Sanga, and by God's blessing the result will be glorious." The mother's injunction could not be brushed aside and Asa Sah had to take charge of the boy, but it was given out that he was his nephew. To avoid the suspicion which a Rajput woman's presence as a nurse in the family of a Vaishya would have roused, Panna had to bid farewell, for the time being, to one for whom she had sacrificed even her own son. With eyes glistening with tears, she left Kamalmer with the *Bari*.

Udai grew up under the fostering care of the governor. His bearing often led people to

disbelieve the story circulated that he was Asa Sah's nephew. Once, on the occasion of the anniversary of the governor's father's death, when the guests had sat down to dinner, the boy "seized a vessel of curds which no threats could prevail upon him to relinquish." On another occasion Udai was sent to receive a distinguished chief who paid a visit to Asa, and the dignified manner in which he did his duty, convinced people that "he was no nephew to the Sah." Rumour spread the truth and brought to Kamalmer not only the nobles of Mewar, but also the neighbouring chiefs who hailed the son of Rana Sanga. The last shred of doubt was removed by the testimony of the nurse and the *Bari* who now returned and rejoiced to see their efforts crowned with success.

The faithful Asa Sah next resigned his trust and placed the prince of Chitor "in the lap of the Kotharia Chauhan," the seniormost noble of Mewar. He had been familiar with the secret for some time and, to dissipate scruples as to the boy's identity, "ate off the same platter with him." The Rao of Jalor now betrothed his daughter to Udai who received the *tika* in the 'castle of Kumbha' and the homage of nearly all the chiefs of Mewar.

Tidings soon reached Banbir at Chitor. But he had grown too unpopular to venture on taking any steps against Udai. After his elevation to the throne, he bore himself haughtily towards his supporters and punished as an insult the refusal of one of the proud chiefs of the Chundawat clan to take the *dauna* from his hand. The *dauna* is a part of the dish of which the Rana partakes, given to any chief whom he wishes to honour at the banquet held at the *rasora* or refectory, where the guests invited to dine with their sovereign are seated according to their rank. When the Rana sends, through the steward of his kitchen, a portion of the dish before him or a little from his own *kansa* or plate, all eyes are directed to the favoured man whose good fortune becomes the subject of subsequent conversation. This privilege was highly valued by the chiefs, and to the refusal of it to the great Man Singh of Amber may be indirectly traced the misfortunes of Rana Pratap and the ruin of Mewar. The test of loyalty lay in the readiness of the nobles to partake of the *dauna*, and the proud nobility of Chitor received only with suppressed anger the mockery of honour from the hand of the arrogant and insolent Banbir who was not the true

heir to the throne. The punishment of the Chundawat chief was resented by all and aggravated their discontent. Most of the chiefs repaired to the valley of Kamalmer and swelled the ranks of Udai's followers. A caravan of five hundred horses and ten thousand oxen, laden with merchandize from Kutch, the dower of Banbir's daughter, was plundered by them, and the booty was used on the occasion of the marriage of Udai with the princess of Jalor. It was celebrated in Jalor and the customary presents were sent by all the rulers of Rajasthan. Deserted by all and defied by the hostile nobles, Banbir held out in his capital ; but his minister secretly let in a thousand resolute adherents of Udai. The keepers of the gates were surprised and slain, and Udai was publicly proclaimed Rana (1537 A. D.). Banbir was permitted to retire with his family and his wealth. He sought refuge in the Deccan, and the Bhonslas of Nagpur are said to be his direct descendants.

Great were the rejoicings when Rana Udai Singh ascended the throne of Chitor after a prolonged exile. The ' song of joy ' composed on the occasion is yet a favourite at Udaipur, and during the festival of *Isani* the women still chant in chorus the ' farewell to

Kamalmer.' But the misfortunes of Mewar which set in with Sanga's death and were accelerated by the fiery valour of Ratna and the capricious conduct of Bikramajit, were completed by Udai Singh. He had not one single qualification for sovereignty. Wanting martial virtue so common and so much prized amongst Rajputs, he was totally unfit for the high position to which he was called. The vices of Ratna and his brother were virtues, compared to the timidity of Udai which soon destroyed a great national feeling.

Udai slumbered his days away in inglorious repose during the reign of Humayun and the period of Sher Shah's usurpation and might have spent the rest of his life in sloth, but a mighty Mughal now came to occupy the throne of Delhi. Udai's slumber was rudely disturbed and he lost his kingdom.

In the same year when the song of joy was raised in the cloud-capped palace of Kamalmer for the restoration of Udai Singh, a note of woe pealed through the walls of Umarkot and was given to the winds of the desert, to proclaim the birth of an infant destined to be the greatest monarch who ever swayed the sceptre of

Hindusthan. In an oasis of the Indian desert Akbar first saw the light of day, his father a fugitive, the diadem torn from his brow and 'its recovery more improbable than was its acquisition by Babur.' The ten years which had elapsed since his accession were passed by Humayun in perpetual strife with his brothers who had been put in charge of some of the provinces of his empire as a matter of favour. Their selfish ambition which led them to rise up against him, met its reward ; for they were all involved in his fall. Since the battle of Kanauj where Humayun lost his crown, his energetic opponent Sher Shah had given him no respite, driving him from place to place between Agra and Lahore. With his family and a small band of adherents, alternately protected and repelled by Hindu chieftains, he next reached the valley of Sind. Here he struggled hard against extremely adverse circumstances to gain a foothold, and attempted to capture almost every stronghold on the Indus. Baffled in every attempt, his followers up in arms against him, the former Emperor of Delhi now turned for shelter to the Rajputs. Vain were his solicitations to the ruler of Jaisalmer, while, according to the Mughal historian, Maldev of Marwar even attempted to take him

captive. The royal exile escaped by plunging into the desert where he suffered along with his family hardships of the most appalling description, until he was given shelter by the chief of Umarkot where his queen Hamida Banu Begum gave birth to Akbar on November 23, 1542.

The high courage and virtues of Humayun increase that interest in his sufferings which royalty in distress never fails to awaken in us. He brought up young Akbar in the same school of adversity in which he himself had first studied under Babur and where he took further lessons later in life. After Akbar's birth he was tossed about between the Persian court, his ancient patrimony in Transoxiana, Kandahar and Kashmir for twelve years, and Akbar bore his share of the hardships. This training was the basis of the boy's future greatness. Rebellions soon broke out in India against Sikandar, a successor of Sher Shah on the throne of Delhi. Humayun, then near Kashmir, took advantage of the situation, crossed the Indus and marched upon Sirhind where he was opposed by a vast Afghan army. The impetuosity of Akbar brought on a general engagement which the veterans deemed madness. Humayun however supported



EMPEROR AKBAR

From an old miniature.
By courtesy of Mr. O. C.
Gangoly, Calcutta

the boy and put him in command of his entire forces. His heroism inspired the Mughals and, in spite of their superiority in numbers, the enemy were completely defeated. Akbar was now only thirteen years old, and this victory was regarded as the augury of his future greatness. Humayun entered Delhi in triumph and again occupied its imperial throne, but he did not live long enough to consolidate his conquests and died suddenly of a fall from the terrace of his library.

Scarcely had Akbar mounted the throne (February, 1556) when Delhi and Agra were wrested from him, and a part of the Punjab constituted all his empire. But through the energy and courage of Bairam Khan, the lost dominions were quickly regained and many new provinces were annexed. Akbar now turned his attention to the Rajputs. The hostility of Maldev of Marwar against Humayun when he was a fugitive in the desert of Rajputana, had neither been forgotten nor forgiven by Hamida Banu Begum, Akbar's mother; and to avenge the wrong, Akbar stormed (1561 A.D). Merta, the second city of the state, and the castle of Nagor which he conferred on Rai Singh, a member of the younger branch of the Rathor family of Marwar, now established in independence.

of the parent state at Bikaner. After a gallant opposition Maldev submitted to Akbar who next marched against Chitor.

There could be no comparison between Akbar and Udai, beyond the facts that both were descended from great forefathers and came to the throne at an early age. Akbar passed through vicissitudes of fortune and appalling hardships, and experience gave him an accurate knowledge of human nature, as continuous struggle infused into him high courage. Udai, on the other hand, was cooped up from infancy in a valley of his native hills, his birth concealed, his education neglected and his activities severely restricted. The star which beamed upon Akbar's cradle in the desert of Umarkot conducted to his aid such counsellors as the sagacious Bairam and the wise and virtuous Abu-l Fazl. But Udai had no friend or guide who could train him up as a worthy successor of Rana Sanga. Those who drove out Banbir and put him on the throne, were not like the 'great ancients' who had fallen in defence of Chitor; and an artful and daring queen of Udai stepped in to govern Mewar and its Rana whose character was such as to be easily controlled by a dominating personality.

According to the annals, Akbar's first attack

against Chitor was repulsed by the masculine courage and energy of this queen who headed the Rajput sallies into the heart of the Mughal camp and, on occasion, even into the Emperor's headquarters. Akbar was therefore compelled to relinquish his adventure, and the fond and imbecile Rana proclaimed that Chitor owed its deliverance to her alone. This indiscretion on his part offended his chiefs. Indignant at the reflection on their courage, they conspired and put her to death.

Akbar had just attained his twenty-fifth year and cherished the ambition of capturing the sacred stronghold of Rajput liberty. Internal discord now tempted him to lay siege to Chitor once more (September, 1567). The site of his camp is still pointed out and extends over a distance of ten miles. The headquarters of Akbar are now marked by a pyramidal column of marble to which tradition has given the name of *Akbar ka diwa*. Scarcely had Akbar encamped before Chitor when the Rana quitted it, leaving others to defend the capital. This want of kingly virtue in the sovereign of Mewar was looked upon as ominous. According to tradition, the guardian goddess of the Sisodiyas had promised never to abandon 'the rock of her

pride,' while a descendant of Bappa Rawal gave up his life for its defence. During the first assault twelve crowned heads were sacrificed in defence of the 'crimson banner' against Alau-d-din. During the second attack led by Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Gujarat, the chieftain of Deolia, a noble scion of Mewar, "though severed from the stem," laid down his life and won his martyrdom. But no regal victim appeared to appease the goddess of Chitor during the third siege and to induce her to retain its *kangras* as her coronet. With Udai Singh fled the 'fair face' which once at dead of night unsealed the eyes of Samar Singh and told him that "the glory of the Rajput was departing." The age-long belief in the inviolability of the fortress now disappeared. The mysterious tie was severed for ever which connected Chitor with the sway of the Ghelotes. The charm was broken and Chitor fell, never to rise again.

Yet it had brave defenders, whose courage and heroism have immortalised the third assault on the fort. Sahidas, the head of the Chundawats, with a numerous band, was at his post at the 'gate of the sun.' Rawat Duda led the 'sons of Sanga.' The feudatory chiefs of Bedla and Kotharia, descended from Prithwiraj of Delhi. the

Paramaras of Bijolia and the Jhalas of Sadri—to name only a few of the heroes of Mewar—were conspicuous for their martial ardour. There were, besides, foreign allies from Jalor, Gwalior and other places. But the names which shine brightest on this gloomy page of the annals of Mewar, which are still held sacred by the bard and the true Rajput and which have been immortalised by Akbar himself, are Jaimall of Badnor and Putta of Kelwa, two of the sixteen superior chiefs of Mewar. Though they did not receive any encouragement from their master who was not a witness of their heroism, they performed prodigies of valour.

Sahidas first fell fighting at the gate of the sun. An altar subsequently raised to his memory, still stands on the brow of the rock which was moistened with his blood. On his death the command devolved on Putta. He was only sixteen. His father had fallen during the last attack on Chitor, and his mother had refrained from self-immolation just to bring up her only child. Like the Spartan mother of old, she commanded him to put on the saffron robe and fight to the bitter end. She also armed herself and his young bride with lance and sword, and the heroic defenders of Chitor were amazed to see them

come down from the rocky heights and fall fighting side by side. The battle raged furiously after this; for when the Rajputs saw these ladies laying down their lives, they grew reckless. Putta was a host in himself, and his sword gleamed with a lurid glow over the field of carnage till he sank into eternal sleep. Jaimall now took the lead. But valour and heroism were unavailing against the weight of numbers, and he soon felt that there was no hope of victory. Part of the northern defences of the fort was blown away by the Mughals who had sprung a mine. They had hoped to storm the breach in the morning and they were exasperated to notice Jaimall, with a few men, repairing the breach at midnight by torch-light. Akbar saw his opportunity, took aim with a matchlock and fired with fatal result. Jaimall was a Rathor, while Putta was a Sisodiya; but their names are even now, as household words, inseparable in Mewar. They had fought shoulder to shoulder for the defence of their beloved Chitor, and in death they were not divided.

After the death of Jaimall the defenders lost all heart; but they revolted against the idea of perishing ingloriously or surrendering to the enemy. The terrible *johar* was arranged, and nine queens, five princesses with two infant sons

and the female members of the families of all the chiefs who had come to the defence of the capital, perished in the flames. While the fire was still burning, eight thousand Rajputs put on their saffron robes and ate the last *bira* together. The gates were then thrown open and those who had no longer any joy in life, rushed into the jaws of death. All the heads of clans fell, and 1,700 of the immediate kindred of the Rana sealed their duty to their country with their lives. Few survived to 'stain the yellow mantle' by inglorious surrender. The victorious Mughal Emperor entered Chitor at last, only to find it a heap of smoking ruins.

Akbar collected a large booty by the sack of the fort. It is said that the cordons of distinction taken by the Mughals from the necks of dead Rajput soldiers, weighed $74\frac{1}{2}$ maunds. To perpetuate the memory of the terrible disaster, the Rajputs have since used the numeral $74\frac{1}{2}$ as a curse. Written on the banker's letter in Rajasthan, it is the strongest of the seals of secrecy. The sin of the sack of Chitor is thereby invoked on all who violate a letter under the safeguard of this mysterious number. Akbar however was much impressed by the gallant opposition offered by the enemy. The heroism of Jaimall and Putta specially

captivated his imagination, and he claimed 'the honour of the death of Jaimall by his own hand.' The sincerity of his feeling of admiration is proved by the marble statues of these two Rajput warriors, which were erected under his orders at the conspicuous entrance to his palace at Agra.

On leaving Chitor, Udai Singh first sought shelter in a forest. Next he passed on to a valley of the Aravalli hills, near the old retreat of his great ancestor Bappa prior to his conquest of Chitor. At the entrance to this valley, he had, a few years before Akbar's invasion, formed a lake still called after him Udai Sagar. On the cluster of adjoining hills, he now built a small palace called Nauchauki. The city that grew up around it was called Udaipur and became the new capital of Mewar. Udai survived the loss of Chitor by only four years, which were spent here. He died at the early age of forty-two (1572 A.D.).

The last act of Udai was to nominate as his heir and successor his favourite son Jagmall who was younger than Pratap. It was a violation of the law and custom of Mewar. A fratricidal war would have been the consequence, had not Pratap meekly submitted to his father's decision. But in spite of Pratap's forbearance, he

was destined to be the next Rana of Mewar and to redeem its prestige. On the full moon of the spring month of *Phalgun* in 1572 A.D., when his brothers and the nobles had gone to attend the cremation ceremony of Udai Singh, Jagmall took possession of the throne in the infant capital, Udaipur. But while the trumpets sounded and the heralds made proclamation and shouted aloud "May the King live for ever," two chiefs conspired to devise means for frustrating the plan of Udai Singh and preventing injustice. One of these was the Rao of Jalor, the maternal uncle of Pratap, and the other Kishna, the Chundawat leader and the 'wise ancient' of Mewar. Jagmall had just come into the *rasora* and Pratap was saddling his horse for departure when Rawat Kishna entered the hall, accompanied by another chief. Each took an arm of Jagmall and with gentle violence removed him to a seat in front of the 'cushion' he had occupied, Kishna remarking, "You had made a mistake, Maharaj; that place belongs to your brother." Pratap was then ushered in. Girding the sword on him and thrice touching the ground, the chief of Salumbar hailed him as Rana of Mewar. The other chiefs present next offered their homage in the customary manner.

CHAPTER IX

RANA PRATAP

When Pratap succeeded to the titles and renown of an illustrious dynasty, he had no capital and no resources, while his chiefs were dispirited by reverses. Yet, full of the noble spirit of his race, he meditated the recovery of Chitor, the vindication of the honour of his house and the restoration of its power. Inspired with these ideals, he hurried into conflict with his powerful antagonist, the Emperor Akbar, without for a moment calculating the forces that were opposed to him. Familiar with the splendid deeds of his forefathers and the ancient glory of Chitor which had more than once been the prison of their foes, he trusted that the revolutions of fortune might co-operate with his own efforts to overturn the unstable throne of Delhi. The reasoning was as just as it was noble. But the odds were heavily against him. The magnitude of the task however only confirmed his determination, and he vowed, in the words of the bard, "to make his mother's milk resplendent." He amply redeemed his pledge and, single-handed, for a quarter of

a century he withstood the combined efforts of the Mughal Empire, now carrying destruction into the plains occupied by the enemy and now flying from rock to rock, feeding his family on the fruits of his native hills and rearing, amidst savage beasts and scarcely less savage men, the nurseling hero Amar—a fit heir to his prowess and revenge. The bare idea that ‘the son of Bappa Rawal should bow his head to mortal man,’ was unbearable to Pratap, and he rejected every overture which had submission for its basis or matrimonial connection with the family of Akbar, though he was lord of a vast empire.

The brilliant achievements of Pratap live in every valley of Mewar, some are enshrined in the heart of every true Rajput and many are recorded in history. In his country tradition is yet eloquent with his exploits, and the descendants of his chiefs cherish the memories of the deeds of their forefathers and melt, as they recite them, into manly tears. But to readers who have not travelled in Mewar and heard the recitations of the bards, a full account of his exploits would appear to be a mere figment of imagination.

Pratap was nobly supported by his chiefs, and though wealth and fortune tempted their fidelity,

not one was found base enough to abandon him. The sons of Jaimall shed their blood in his cause along with the descendants of Putta. The Chundawat chief of Salumbar became his most faithful follower and clung to him to the last day of his eventful life. These are some of the luminaries that shine brightest against the dark background of the history of Mewar in its evil days under Pratap. Some veterans, attracted by the very desperation of his fortunes, pressed to his standard to fight and die with him. Amongst these was the Jhala chief of Delwara whose devotion gained him a position at the Rana's right hand.

To commemorate the desolation of Chitor which the bardic historian represents as a 'widow' despoiled of her ornaments, Pratap forbade to himself and his successors every article of luxury and pomp, until its glory should be redeemed. Gold and silver dishes were to be laid aside by them for *pattras* of leaves, their beds were henceforth to be of straw and their beards were to be left untouched. And in order more distinctly to mark the fallen fortunes of Chitor and to stimulate their recovery, he commanded that the martial *nakkaras* which had always sounded in the van of the army and processions, should follow in the rear. This

last sign of its misfortunes still survives. The beard of the Rana is also untouched by the shears even now, and though he eats off gold and silver plates and sleeps upon a bed, he places leaves of trees beneath the one and straw under the other.

With the help of some chiefs of judgment and experience, Pratap remodelled his government, adapting it to the exigencies of the times and to his slender resources. New grants of land were issued, with regulations defining the nature of the services required from the holders. Kamalmer, now the seat of his government, was strengthened along with Gogunda and other mountain-fortresses and, unable to keep the field in the plains of Mewar, he followed the practice of his ancestors and commanded his subjects, on pain of death, to retire to the mountains. The result was that for a long period the fertile tracts watered by the Banas and the Berach, from the Aravalli chain on the west to the eastern table-land, were *be chirag*, i.e., 'without a lamp.'

Many stories are told of the unrelenting severity with which Pratap enforced obedience to this stern policy. Frequently, with a few horse, he would issue forth to see that his commands were obeyed. The silence of the desert prevailed in

the plains ; grass had usurped the place of the waving corn ; the highways were choked with the thorny *babul*, and beasts of prey made their abode in the homes of his subjects. In the midst of this scene of desolation a single goat-herd, trusting to elude observation, once disobeyed his sovereign's injunction and pastured his flock in the luxuriant meadows of Untala on the banks of the Banas. He was discovered and, after a few questions, was killed and hung up under the orders of the Rana as a grim warning to others. By such patriotic severity Pratap rendered ' the garden of Rajasthan ' of no value to the conqueror, and the commerce already established between the Mughal court and Europe was intercepted, while the goods that were being conveyed from Surat and other ports to Delhi through Mewar were plundered.

Often was Pratap heard to exclaim, " Had Udai Singh never been born or none intervened between himself and Rana Sanga, no Mughal should ever have lorded it over Rajasthan." Conditions in India had assumed a new form during the preceding century : the scattered principalities on the Jumna and the Ganges had been silently growing into importance, and Amber and Marwar had attained immense power. Numerous minor states were also attaining shape and

strength on both sides of the Chambal when Udai occupied the throne of Mewar. A leader of commanding genius alone was wanting to organise them and to snatch the sceptre from the Muslim Emperor of Delhi. Such a leader they had found in Sanga who possessed every quality which extorts spontaneous obedience, and the superiority of whose birth and rank was admitted without question from the Himalayas to Rameswaram. These states had powerful motives for obeying such a leader but for whom they were in danger of being wiped out ; and such a one they would have found once more in Sanga's grandson Pratap, had Udai Singh never intervened or had a less gifted Mughal sovereign than Akbar been his contemporary. But Akbar secured the support and sympathy of almost all of them through his far-sighted policy. He united his own family with some of the Rajput princes by ties of marriage, and won over many others with handsome rewards. Akbar himself married a daughter of Raja Behari Mall of Amber, who became the mother of Salim. He also married a princess of Jaisalmer. Again, Bhagwandas, the son and successor of Raja Behari Mall, gave a daughter in marriage to Salim and consequently Raja Man, his nephew and adopted son, was the brother-in-law of the Mughal prince.

Amber and Jaisalmer thus became firm supporters of the Mughal Empire. Maldev of Marwar was a powerful ruler who had fought stubbornly against Sher Shah. So stern was his resistance that Sher, though finally victorious, once frankly confessed his imprudence in attacking Marwar, and remarked that "he had nearly lost the Empire of Hindusthan for a handful of barley." But shortly after the death of Maldev, his son Udai Singh gave a daughter in marriage to Salim. He was the first Rathor prince to link his family through matrimonial connection with a Tartar, and the reward he received was indeed splendid : for four provinces yielding an annual income of £200,000 were given him for Jodh Bai who later became the mother of Shah Jahan. This income at once doubled the revenues of Marwar which consequently became a faithful ally of Akbar. Rai Singh, the prince of Bikaner, also gave a daughter to Salim. Her son was the unfortunate Parvez. With such examples as Amber, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Marwar before them and with less power to resist temptation, the minor rulers of Rajasthan, who had numerous vassals under them, readily became the satraps of Delhi, and the importance of most of them was increased by the change.

Thus, while Pratap dreamt golden dreams for his country and gave free play to those lofty aspirations which meditated liberty for Mewar, his astute opponent laid a carefully conceived plan to thwart his noble ideal. Pratap's heart was filled with anguish when he found that Akbar's policy had the effect of arraying against him his own kindred in faith as well as in blood. Even his own brothers Sagarji and Sakta joined the Emperor. As the price of desertion, Sagarji received from him the fortress and the lands of Kandhar which were reputed to have been the site of the ancient capital of the Sisodiyas. When Mewar was actually attacked by the Mughals, Sagarji paid his respects at the court of Akbar and was appointed commander of 200 horse. The life of Sakta was chequered and rather extraordinary. He was the second of the twenty-four sons of Udai Singh. When only five years old, he showed signs of that fearless disposition which marked his manhood. One day the armourer brought to the court a new dagger and suggested, as usual, that its edge might be tried on thinly spread cotton. Sakta asked his father "if it was not intended to cut bones and flesh" and, without waiting for an answer, tried it on his own little hand. The blood gushed out on the carpet, but he betrayed

no sign of pain. The Rana was amazed and recalled the prediction of an astrologer that Sakta would be the bane of Mewar. For the sake of his country he at once ordered the child to be removed from the court and put to death. The old Salumbar chief who was childless, loved the boy and begged for his life as a reward for his services to the state. He promised to bring him up as his future heir, so that he might never have occasion to return to Mewar. His prayer was granted and Sakta's life was spared. He was removed by Salumbar to his own castle and was forgotten at Udaipur. The adoptive father of Sakta had children in his old age and felt it difficult to declare him his heir. While he wavered, the young prince was sent for by Pratap who had by this time succeeded Udai Singh as Rana, and longed to see his exiled younger brother restored. Sakta returned to Udaipur and lived very amicably with Pratap and his people for some time. But his fiery and impetuous temper soon led to trouble, and a dispute ensued with Pratap while they were hunting. It gradually grew bitter and in time engendered mutual dislike. One day Pratap suddenly proposed to decide their quarrel by single combat. Sakta consented and asked him to hurl the first

spear ; but Pratap, not to be beaten in generosity, offered him the first chance. At last they agreed to charge together ; but, as they took their ground, the family priest rushed in between the combatants and implored them not to ruin Mewar with fratricidal strife. His appeal fell on deaf ears and the brothers were unmoved. There being no other way to prevent the unnatural bloodshed, the priest drew out his dagger, plunged it into his heart and fell a lifeless corpse between them. Appalled at the horrible sight, with "the blood of the Brahmin priest on their head," they desisted from the combat ; but Pratap, waving his hand in mute agony, commanded Sakta to quit his kingdom at once. Sakta bowed and retired. He soon repaired to the Mughal Emperor and sought redress for his unjust banishment.

A Mughal historian designated the Rajput princes "at once the props and ornaments of the throne of Akbar." But they were fearful odds against Pratap. The arms of his countrymen, when turned against him, derived additional weight from their degradation, and their feeling of shame kindled into jealousy and hatred against his magnanimous resolution which they lacked the virtue and courage to imitate. While many of the Rajput princes intermarried with the

Mughals and disregarded Hindu prejudices, the Rana renounced all alliance with those who, in his opinion, were thus degraded ; and he sought out and incorporated with the first class of nobles of his own kin the descendants of the ancient rulers of Delhi, Patan, Marwar and Dhar. To the eternal honour of Pratap and his issue, it should be pointed out that to the very close of the Mughal rule they refused alliance, on principle, not only with the Emperors of Delhi, but even with the princes of Marwar and Amber. This scrupulous regard for principle was rewarded by a proud triumph recorded in the autograph letters of the most powerful of these princes. Whilst they had risen to opulence and power from the surrender of principle, Mewar had decayed from its adherence to it ; and even while basking in the sunshine of the favour of the Mughal court, they solicited, and that “ humbly,” to be re-admitted to the honour of matrimonial connection with the Sisodiyas, “ to be regenerated,” “ to be made Rajputs.” And their request was granted only on condition of their abjuring the practice which had disunited the Rajputs for more than a century. They also agreed that the issue of their marriage with the daughters of Mewar should be their heirs.

An anecdote may here be related, illustrating Pratap's feelings against inter-marriage in violation of Hindu customs. It had a material influence on the history of Mewar. Raja Man who had succeeded Bhagwandas on the throne of Amber, was one of the most illustrious princes of his age, and from him may be dated the rise of this state. His courage and talents were of a high order, and he became the most conspicuous of all the generals of the Mughal Empire. To him Akbar was indebted for half his triumphs. His conquests extended from Kabul to Arakan on the Indian Ocean—the former reunited and the latter subjugated to the Empire by a Rajput prince and a Rajput army. The Raja was returning from the conquest of Sholapur to Hindusthan when he invited himself to an interview with Pratap, then at Kamalmer, who advanced to Udai Sagar to receive him. On the mound which embanks this lake a feast was prepared for the ruler of Amber. The board was spread, the Raja was summoned and Prince Amar waited upon him. But Pratap was absent, and apologies alleging headache were offered by his son who requested Raja Man to waive all ceremony, receive his welcome and begin. The Raja, in a tone at once dignified and respectful, replied: " Tell the Rana

I can divine the cause of his headache ; but the error is irremediable, and if he refuses to put a plate (*kansa*) before me, who will ? ” Further subterfuge was useless and the Rana appeared to express his regret, but added that “ he could not eat with a Rajput who had given his sister to the Mughal Emperor and who probably ate with him.” Raja Man was unwise to have risked this disgrace ; and if the invitation went from Pratap, the insult was ungenerous as well as impolitic. But tradition and history do not suggest that Pratap invited him. Raja Man left the feast untouched, save the few grains of rice he offered to *Annadeva*, which he placed in his turban, observing as he withdrew, “ It was for the preservation of your honour that we sacrificed our own ; but abide in peril, if such be your resolve, for this country shall not hold you.” Then mounting his horse, he turned to the Rana and again muttered, “ If I do not humble your pride, my name is not Man.” As he rode off, Pratap replied that “ he should always be happy to meet him.” Every act and every word was reported to the Mughal Emperor who felt exasperated at the insult which, he thought, was thus offered to himself, and who justly dreaded the revival of those Hindu prejudices which, he believed, he had succeeded

in removing. He at once made up his mind to punish the Rana. Raja Man's visit to Udaipur thus hastened the first of those sanguinary battles which have immortalised the name of Pratap.

A large Mughal army soon took the field against him, with its headquarters at Ajmer. Prince Salim led the war, guided by the advice of Raja Man and Mahabat Khan. Pratap trusted to his native hills and the valour of only twenty-two thousand Rajputs to withstand the mighty and countless host of Akbar. The imperial army encountered little opposition at the exterior defiles by which it penetrated the western side of the Aravalli. The region to which Pratap restricted his activities lay around, but chiefly to the west of, his new capital Kamalmer. It was about 80 miles in length and the same in breadth. The whole of this area is mountain and forest, gorge and stream. The approaches to the capital from every point to its north, south, and west, are valleys. They have perpendicular rocks on either side and they occasionally open into spaces sufficiently capacious to encamp a large force. Haldighat (or Gogunda) was such a space, beyond which a neck of the mountains obstructed the valley and made it almost impassable.

Pratap tried to defend this pass against the imperial army with the flower of Mewar (June 18, 1576 A.D.). On the highest cliffs and pinnacles overlooking the field of battle were the faithful aborigines, the Bhils, with their bows and arrows and with huge pieces of stone ready to roll down on the enemy below. The Rajputs were posted in the valley. The battle commenced early in the morning, and glorious indeed was the resistance offered by the sons of Mewar. Clan after clan hurled itself on the enemy with desperate intrepidity and emulated the daring of the Rana who led the 'crimson banner' into the thick of the fight. In vain did Pratap strain every nerve to encounter Raja Man who was in the rear of the Mughal army. Though denied the luxury of revenge on his Rajput foe, he made good his passage to where Salim commanded from the back of an elephant. His guards fell before Pratap and, but for the steel plates which defended the *howda*, the lance of the Rajput would have deprived the Emperor Akbar of his heir. The Rana's steed, the gallant Chetak, nobly seconded his master, and is represented in all historical drawings of this battle with one foot raised upon the elephant of the Mughal¹ Prince, while the rider hurls his lance



RANA PRATAP

From a Rajput painting of the
17th century, in the collection of
Mr. Ajit Ghose, Calcutta.

against his foe. The driver of the elephant was slain, and the infuriated animal, now without control, hurriedly carried off Salim from the battle-field. The carnage was terrible around him, for the gallant Mughals were as eager to defend Salim as the heroes of Mewar were to support their leader who had already received seven wounds. The Rana was thrice surrounded by the exasperated Mughals and was thrice rescued by his gallant bodyguard. But he was desperate and again plunged into the ranks of the enemy. Marked by the 'royal umbrella' which he would not lay aside and which collected the might of the enemy against him, he was at length nearly overwhelmed, when the Jhala chief gave a signal proof of his fidelity and extricated him with the loss of his own life. Mana (the Jhala chief) seized upon the insignia of Mewar and, rearing the 'golden sun' over his own head, drew after himself the brunt of the battle, while Pratap was forced from the field. Thus courage and self-sacrifice proved unavailing against an army which was not only vastly superior in numbers but also included field artillery. Of the 22,000 Rajputs assembled for the defence of Haldighat, only 8,000 quitted the field alive. But Haldighat will never be forgotten while a Rajput lives in India or a bard survives to tell the tale.

Unattended, Pratap fled on the gallant Chetak, who had borne him throughout the day and who now saved him by leaping over a mountain stream when closely pursued by two Mughal horsemen. The stream checked their advance for a few moments ; but Chetak, like his master, was wounded and his pursuers were gaining ground. The flash from the flinty rock announced them close at his heels, when the salutation " Ho! rider of the blue horse," spoken in the broad accents of his native tongue, made the Rana look back. And he saw but a single horseman—that horseman, his brother.

Sakta who wanted to wreak vengeance upon Pratap, had been attached by Akbar to the personal guards of Salim and had accompanied the Mughal army to Haldighat. But as he witnessed the noble courage and fearless patriotism of his brother, his resentment was extinguished and a feeling of affection, mingled with sad and humiliating recollections, took possession of his soul. When after the conclusion of the battle, he saw Pratap flying on the ' blue horse ' unattended and hotly pursued by the two Mughal chiefs, he joined in the pursuit, but only to slay the pursuers who fell beneath his lance. And now, for the first time since their separation, the two brothers embraced

in friendship. Chetak, feeble from loss of blood, dropped to the ground soon after, and as the Rana unbuckled his caparison in order to place it upon Ankara, the horse now presented by his brother, the noble steed expired. An altar was raised subsequently on the spot where Chetak died, and it still exists. The entire scene may even now be seen depicted on the walls of half the houses in the capital of Mewar.

The greetings between the brothers were necessarily short. Sakta left Pratap with a promise to return at the earliest opportunity. When he rejoined the Mughal army, Salim wanted to know the result of the pursuit of the Rana. The story related by Sakta was that Pratap had killed his two pursuers and also his brother's horse, and made good his escape, obliging him to return on one of theirs. This was naturally disbelieved, and Salim pledged his word to pardon him if he told the truth. Sakta replied, " My brother is the only hope of Mewar, and I could not witness his danger without defending him." Salim kept his word, but dismissed Sakta from service. On his way to Udaipur where he meant to join Pratap, Sakta reconquered the fort of Bhainsror previously taken by the Mughals and offered it as a *nazar* (present) to the Rana. The latter however at once

made a grant of it to his brother, and it long remained the chief abode of Sakta's descendants.

Though flushed with victory at Haldighat, Salim had to leave Mewar on account of the approach of the rainy season which rendered military operations difficult in the hills. The Mughal army however returned in spring when Pratap was again severely defeated (1577 A.D.). It now fell to his lot to lose one after another most of his important fortresses which were captured by Mughal generals like Raja Man, Mahabat Khan and Farid Khan. In one of the battles was cut off the chief bard of Mewar who had inspired by his brave deeds, as well as by his songs, the spirit of resistance in Pratap and whose couplets on the glorious achievements of his master are still in every mouth.

Misfortune and adversity gradually thickened around the great Rajput. He was beset on every side with the enemy, dislodged from the most secret retreat and hounded from glen to glen. A large part of Mewar was overrun and the subjugation of the rest seemed only a question of time. The task of the Mughal army however was not easy, for the Rajputs decided to sell their lives dear and to fight stubbornly in the intricate passes of their native hills to which the enemy were strangers. While

his pursuers thought that Pratap was panting in some hiding-place, he would suddenly re-assemble his bands and assail them unawares. Thus was Farid's army blockaded in a defile and cut off to a man, while its general was dreaming of making a captive of the Rana. Yet the prospects were gloomy before Pratap, and there was not a single ray of hope piercing the encircling darkness. The rainy season alone, during which the campaign had to be suspended by the Mughals, brought him some respite. Years thus rolled away without any slackening of the efforts of Akbar to subjugate Mewar or any alleviation of the misfortunes of Pratap whose resources were gradually dwindling. He himself did not mind hardships and dangers which must be faced by the warrior. It was his family that was the chief cause of his anxiety. He dreaded their captivity, and his apprehensions almost proved true on some occasions. Once they were saved by the faithful Bhils who carried them in wicker baskets and concealed them in the tin mines of Jawara where they guarded and fed them. Bolts and rings fixed in trees have been preserved and are still to be seen near this place. Baskets were suspended from them when Pratap's family was in hiding—the only cradles of the royal children of Mewar,

which protected them from the tiger and the wolf.

Yet the fortitude of Pratap remained unshaken, and a spy sent by Akbar described the Rana and his chiefs sitting at a scanty meal, but maintaining even now all the etiquette observed in their prosperity. The Rana gave the *dauna* to the most deserving and, though it consisted only of the wild fruit of the country, it was received by them with all the reverence of better days. Such inflexible patriotism and magnanimity touched the soul of Akbar and extorted the homage of every man in Rajasthan. Even those princes who had lost their liberty and adorned the gorgeous court of the Mughal Emperor, could not withhold their admiration. Princes and nobles, Hindu as well as Mughal, vied with one another in exalting the heroism of Pratap. The Khan Khanan, the first of the nobles of Delhi, addressed to him some inspiring stanzas which have been preserved in the annals. He said, "All is unstable in this world ; land and wealth will disappear, but a great name lives for ever. Pratap abandoned wealth and land but never bowed his head. Alone of all the princes of Hind, did he preserve the honour of his race."

There were however moments when the wants

and miseries of those dearer to him than his own life, drove Pratap to despair. With such pertinacity did the Mughal soldiers pursue him that once "five meals had been prepared and abandoned for want of an opportunity to eat them." On one occasion his queen and his daughter-in-law prepared a few cakes from the flour of the meadow grass, and one was given to each of the children—half for the present and the rest for a future meal. Pratap was stretched beside them on the ground, pondering on his misfortunes, when a piercing cry from his daughter roused him from reflection. A wild cat had darted on the reserved portion of the food, and the agony of hunger made her shriek aloud. Until that moment Pratap's fortitude had been unshaken. He had beheld his sons and his kindred fall around him on the battle-field without emotion. "For this," he thought, "the Rajput was born." But "the cries of his daughter unmanned him. He cursed the name of royalty, if only to be enjoyed on such conditions," and wrote a letter to Akbar, suing for peace.

Overjoyed at this indication of his submission, the Emperor commanded public rejoicings in his capital and exultingly shewed the letter to Prithwiraaj, a Rathor nobleman who followed the victorious car of Akbar. He was the younger

brother of Rai Singh, the Raja of Bikaner, who had given a daughter in marriage to Prince Salim. Prithwiraj was one of the most gallant chieftains of the age and, like the Troubadour knights of mediaeval Europe, could grace a cause with song as well as defend it with the sword. In an assembly of the bards of Rajasthan, the palm of poetic merit was unanimously awarded to the Rathor cavalier. He adored the very name of Pratap, and his letter filled Prithwiraj with grief. With all the warmth and frankness of his nature, he told the Emperor that it must be a forgery of some enemy of the Rana, whose only object was to bring dishonour on his name. "I know him well," he said; "for your crown he would not submit to you." He obtained the Emperor's permission to send a courier with a letter to Pratap to ascertain the fact. Actually he transmitted a few inspiring couplets composed by himself, which ran as follows: "The hopes of the Hindu rest on the Hindu; yet the Rana disappoints them. But for Pratap, all would be placed on the same level by Akbar, for our chiefs have lost their valour. All has he purchased but the son of Udai; he is beyond his price. Will Chitor also come to this market? Though Pratap has spent all his wealth, yet

this treasure has he preserved. Despair has driven many to this mart to witness their dishonour: from such dishonour the descendant of Hamir alone has been preserved. The world asks, ' What is the secret of Pratap's strength ? ' Nothing but his manliness and his sword: with them well has he maintained the Khatri's pride. The Emperor will one day be surely overcome—he cannot live for ever. Then will our race come to Pratap for the seed of the Rajput to sow in our desolate lands. To him all look for its preservation." These lines had a miraculous effect on Pratap. They drove out the gloom that had settled on his mind and nerved his drooping spirit, rousing him to immediate action. But his army had been thinned by death and he could not make up the loss, for he had no funds to attract new recruits. As it was thus impossible to stem the tide of the Mughal invasion, and as submission was now not to be thought of, Pratap formed a resolution worthy of his character. He determined to bid farewell to his native land and the blood-stained Chitor, to lead the Sisodiyas to the banks of the Indus and to found there a new kingdom flying the crimson banner of Mewar, leaving a desert between him and his inexorable enemy. With his family and all that

was yet noble in Mewar—his chieftains and vassals who preferred exile to submission,—Pratap had actually crossed the Aravalli and reached the confines of the desert when an incident occurred which made him change his plan and return to the land of his forefathers. The minister of Pratap whose ancestors had for ages served Mewar, now placed at his disposal all their hoarded wealth. It was vast enough to pay for the services of twenty-five thousand soldiers for twelve years. Pratap was induced to accept this splendid gift for the liberation of Mewar, and the annals record in golden letters the name of Bhama Sah as the saviour of his country. The Rana enlisted new troops and quickly re-organised his army and, while his enemy imagined that he was trying to effect a retreat through the desert to the west, surprised Shahbaz in his camp at Dawer. The fugitives were pursued and cut to pieces along with the Mughal garrison in a neighbouring fort. Before they could recover from their consternation, Abdulla and his forces at Kamalmer were surprised and put to the sword. Mewar's new capital was thus won back. Thirty-two other fortified towns were next carried by surprise in quick succession, the garrison being put to death without mercy in every case. To use the words of the annals,



A RAJPUT PRINCE WITH HIS MINISTER

From a Rajput painting of the
18th century, in the collection of
Mr. Ajit Ghose, Calcutta.

“Pratap made a desert of Mewar ; he made an offering to the sword of whatever dwelt in its plains.” In one short campaign he recovered what Akbar had taken years to subjugate, and the whole of Mewar with the exception of Chitor, Ajmer and Mandalgarh again passed into the hands of its rightful king. In return for the triumph which Raja Man Singh had enjoyed at Haldighat, Pratap invaded Amber and sacked its chief mart Malpura.

Akbar made no efforts to reconquer Mewar, and the last years of Pratap passed in comparative repose and peace. It is true that during this period the Mughal arms found fresh fields of ambition more attractive than the hilly regions of Mewar. It is also a fact that the exalted character and the valour of Pratap attracted the sympathy and admiration not only of the Hindu princes, but also of the Muslim nobles, including the great Khan Khanan, who swelled the train of the Emperor, and he was certainly considerate enough to realise that the sentiments of his powerful and sincere allies ought to be respected. But Akbar's forbearance is also to be ascribed to his generosity and to the feelings of respect which the patriotism of Pratap is said to have roused in him.

Repose however was no boon to the noble son of Mewar. A mind like Pratap's could enjoy no peace, while from the summit of the pass which guarded Udaipur, his wistful eyes rested on the battlements of his beloved Chitor to which he must ever be a stranger. Imagine the warrior, yet in manhood's prime, broken with fatigue and covered with scars, casting a longing look on the hill-top stained with the blood of his ancestors, whilst in the "dark chamber" of his mind the scenes of glory enacted there shone with unearthly lustre,—first, the youthful Bappa on whose head was the "*mor* he had won from the Mori;" next the warlike Samar Singh arming, for the last day of Rajput independence, to die with Prithwiraj on the banks of the Ghaggar; then the twelve sons of Lachhman Singh descending the steep of Chitor, with the blood-red banner floating above their heads, to plunge into the battle, while from the heights of the ramparts its guardian goddess looked down on the carnage below. Again, there appeared in all the pomp of sacrifice the youthful heroes Jaimall and Putta and the Chundawat dame leading her daughter into the jaws of death. At length clouds of darkness dimmed the walls of Chitor; from its battlements the guardian goddess had departed, and tints of dishonour began to blend with the

visions of glory, and lo ! Udai Singh was flying from the rock-fortress so sacred to the Sisodiyas ! Aghast at the picture his fancy had portrayed, now imagine him turning to the contemplation of his own pitiable condition, indebted as he was for a cessation of hostilities to the compassion of his enemy, compared with which scorn is enduring and contempt even enviable.

A premature decay assailed the pride of Rajasthan—a diseased mind preyed on an exhausted frame and prostrated him in the very summer of his days. A powerful sympathy is excited by the picture which has been drawn of the last scene of the drama of his life. The dying hero is lying in a lowly dwelling and his chiefs, the faithful companions of many a glorious day, are standing round his pallet in silent grief. A groan of mental anguish from the Rana makes the chief of Salumbar enquire “what so afflicts his soul that it cannot depart in peace.” He rallies and replies: “It lingers for some consolatory pledge that my country would not be abandoned to the foreigner.” Then with the death-pang upon him, he relates an incident which had led him to form an unfavourable opinion of Amar, his son and heir-apparent. On the banks of Lake Pichola, a few low-roofed huts had been constructed which

served as the dwelling-place of Pratap's family in their days of distress. Their roofs were thatched, and a bamboo-pole protruded beyond the eaves in one of them. Once, while Amar was entering it, the folds of his turban were caught in this pole, and it came to the ground. Not being accustomed to lowly life, the prince was visibly annoyed. Pratap noticed with pain the expression of the inner feeling on his face and thought that Amar was ease-loving and would never be able to endure the hardships and struggles of a patriot's life. "These sheds," said the dying Rana, "will give place to sumptuous dwellings, generating a love of ease, and luxury and other vices will ensue, to which the independence of Mewar which we have bled to defend, will be sacrificed: and you, my chiefs, will follow the pernicious example." "By the throne of Bappa Rawal," they pledged themselves to uphold the dignity of Mewar and never to suffer the prince to tarnish it. The soul of Pratap was now satisfied and he expired peacefully.

Thus closed the life of a great patriot whose memory is even now idolised by every Rajput and will continue to be so till every spark of patriotic feeling is extinguished in the race. It is not easy to realise the intensity of feeling

which could lead Rana Pratap to oppose the resources of a small principality against one of the most powerful empires of the world, the armies of which were larger and more efficient than those led by the Persian Emperor against the liberties of Greece. Undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, untiring perseverance and fidelity such as no nation can boast of, were the only materials opposed to a soaring ambition, commanding talents, unlimited means and the fervour of religious zeal. All these however proved insufficient to contend with one unconquerable mind. There is not a pass in the Aravalli that is not sanctified by some deed of Pratap,—some brilliant victory or, oftener, a glorious defeat. Haldighat is the Thermopylae of Mewar and Dawer her Marathon.

CHAPTER X

THE FALL OF MEWAR—RANA AMAR SINGH

Amar, the eldest of the seventeen sons of Pratap, succeeded him in 1597. He had been the constant companion of his father and a partner of his hardships and dangers from the early age of eight. Amar had been initiated into the perils and tactics of warfare by his heroic father, and entered on his career in the flower of his manhood.

Akbar survived Pratap by eight years, but did not change his policy in Mewar, so that Amar was left in peace during this period. The new Rana took advantage of this opportunity to remodel the institutions of his country. He made a new assessment of land, established a gradation of ranks amongst his chiefs and regulated the sumptuary laws which are even now to be seen engraved on pillars of stone in various parts of the country. He also constructed a small palace on the banks of Lake Pichola, named, after himself, Amar Mahal (the abode of immortality). Mewar was prosperous and peaceful for a time under him.

When Jahangir had been four years on the throne, he formed the plan of subduing Mewar—the only state in Rajasthan that had successfully defied the power of Delhi up to that time. Information reached the Rana when the imperial army was already on its march against Mewar. An easy and peaceful life had damped the martial ardour of the heir of Pratap, who wavered in this crisis and could not decide whether to sue for peace or to emulate the patriotism of his father. As Pratap's prophetic vision had indicated immediately before his death, there was no dearth of timid counsellors who advised their peace-loving Rana to avoid bloodshed by accepting the imperial *firman*. When the devoted old chiefs of his father's days repaired to the palace to warn the Rana of the imminent peril and to receive from him instructions for warlike preparations, they found him with some of his advisers in the audience-hall, still hesitating and undecided. For a moment all were amazed—they did not expect this from the son of Pratap. They took their seats and waited silently for his lead, but in vain. At last the aged chief of Salumbar stood up, and recalling to their minds the dying command of their great departed leader, demanded its fulfilment. His speech was

a clarion-call, and they all resolved to imitate the noble Pratap,

—preferring

Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp.

The Rana was yet dumb. A magnificent mirror of European make was hung up in the hall. In a frenzy of impatience the chief of Salumbar hurled 'the slave of the carpet' against the splendid bauble. As it crumbled to pieces, he seized the Rana by the arm and removed him from the throne. "To horse, chiefs!" he exclaimed, "and save from infamy the son of Pratap." The Rana flew into a passion at this seeming indignity and loudly called the old chief a traitor; but conscious of his sacred duty, the latter took no notice of the insult and made Amar mount his horse. The other chiefs mounted theirs and the party at once started on its march towards Dawaer where the Mughal army was encamped. Surrounded by the chivalry of Mewar, Amar shewed his resentment by bursting into tears. When however he recovered from this fit of passion, he was not slow to realise his mistake, and he made a salutation to the chiefs and apologised to them for his lack of courtesy. He

expressed his gratitude to the hoary chief of Salumbar in particular and told him, "Lead on; nor shall you ever have to regret the absence of your late sovereign."

The enthusiasm of the Rana and his chiefs transmitted itself to the army which soon reached Dawar where it encountered the imperial forces as they entered a pass. The battle was long and sanguinary. The valour of the Rajputs again flashed forth and the sword, sheathed so long, gleamed with all its former brilliance over the field of carnage. The Mughals were defeated, and credit for the victory was chiefly due to the brave Kanha, an uncle of the Rana. A short truce followed and a more bloody battle took place in the spring of 1610 A.D. in the pass of Ranpur where the imperial army under its general Abdulla was almost exterminated. But Mewar lost the best and bravest of its chiefs and the victory was dearly bought. It led however to a feverish exultation all over the country, which was like a hectic flush preceding the pallor of death.

The Emperor Jahangir was alarmed at these successive defeats of his army. He realised that the conquest of Mewar would not be possible unless a division were created in the ranks of

the Rajputs, and he decided to set up a rival Rana and to instal him in the ancient capital of the Sisodiyas. Sagarji, the unworthy brother of Pratap, was selected for the purpose. He was invested with the insignia of dignity by the Emperor himself and was sent to Chitor under a Mughal escort. It was expected that this would withdraw from Amar the support of many of his chiefs and soldiers. But Jahangir's expectations were not realised, and none but his own officers and dependents offered homage to his nominee. The Rajputs generally looked askance at the spurious Rana and Sagarji himself felt uneasy amidst the ruined grandeur of the seat of his ancestors. He felt keenly that he was instrumental in keeping under the sway of the enemy the land of his birth and the altars of the heroes who had fallen gloriously in its defence. The triumphal columns of Chitor looked down upon him in silent admonition, and he could not pass over one finger's breadth of its sacred soil, moistened with the blood of his forefathers, without being reminded of their splendid deeds and his own unworthiness. Compunction gave rise to hallucinations, and tradition tells us how "the terrific Bhairon openly manifested his displeasure" to the creature of the Mughals.

Unable to bear the tortures of conscience, he sent for his nephew Amar, restored Chitor to him and retired to a solitary hill on the banks of the Chambal. Later he went to see the Emperor Jahangir and, being taken to task for his action, drew out his dagger and stabbed himself in his presence.

There was naturally great rejoicing amongst the Rajputs when Amar took possession of Chitor of which his grandfather had been dispossessed by Akbar about half a century before. With it the Rana acquired by surrender or assault the possession of no less than eighty of the chief towns and fortresses of Mewar.

The capture of Untala, one of these fortresses, furnished a very stirring episode. Untala was about eighteen miles from Udaipur and was situated on a high plot, with a stream flowing by its walls. These were of solid masonry-work, lofty and with round towers at intervals. The governor's house was in the centre and the fort had only one gate. When the Rana assembled his forces in his capital for the attack, the clan named Saktawat claimed the honour of leading the van. Its valour was beyond dispute and its services to the state were indeed great; but the Chundawat clan had a hereditary title to this privilege. The rivalry between the

two clans might have led to an appeal to the sword, but the tact of the Rana averted the danger. "The *harawal* to the clan which first enters Untala," was his decision, and the rival clans accepted it without protest. It was a challenge to their prowess and valour, which had to be taken up. The two clans started simultaneously a few hours before day-break. The wives and children of the warriors saw them off and the bards sang the praise of each clan as it moved out.

The Saktawats made directly for the gateway of the fort which they reached at day-break. The Mughal garrison was unprepared, but the walls were soon manned and a fierce fight ensued. The Chundawats, who had taken a different route, had to cross a swamp. They were therefore late in reaching Untala. But they had wisely brought ladders with them, and their chief led the escalade without any delay. Fate however was against him, and a musket-ball rolled his dead body back amongst his men. The Saktawat leader rode an elephant and it was driven against the gate of the fort, which he hoped to force. But its projecting spikes prevented the animal from applying its strength against the gate. His men were falling fast around him by the lances of the Mughals, and delay meant loss to

life. A sudden shout from the ranks of the Chundawats now led him to think that they were possibly on the verge of success. No time was to be lost. He came down from his seat, placed his body against the spikes and commanded the driver, on pain of instant death, to drive the elephant against him. The gate gave way and his men rushed into the fort over the lifeless body of their leader. But he laid down his life in vain, for the dead body of the chief of the rival clan had already reached the fort, and the shout which hastened him to sacrifice his life, was the signal of victory. On the death of the Chundawat chief, his lieutenant had taken up the command. He was a reckless man. Rolling the dead body of his chief in his scarf, he tied it on his back. Having next cleared the way with his lance, he scaled the wall and threw the corpse over the parapet into the fort, shouting aloud, "The vanguard to the Chundawats ! we are first in !" The shout was echoed by the Chundawat soldiers below, and the ramparts had come into their possession just before the Saktawats forced the gate. The standard of Mewar was hoisted in the fort, and the Chundawats retained their hereditary privilege. A large number of Mughal soldiers were killed. Two Mughal commanders were deeply engaged

in a game of chess when information of the Rajput attack reached them. Confident of success, they continued their game. When surrounded by the victorious Rajputs, they coolly begged that they might be allowed to finish their game. Their request was granted, but they were eventually put to death.

Jahangir's plan of driving a wedge through the Sisodiyas had failed on account of the scruples of Sagarji, and the recent triumphs of Amar led the Emperor to think of taking serious steps to subdue Mewar. He soon equipped a vast army and raised the imperial standard at Ajmer where the forces assembled under his immediate inspection. His son Parvez was appointed commander of the expedition, "with instructions, in case the Rana or his eldest son Karna should repair to him, to receive them with becoming attention, and to offer no molestation to the country." But Amar thought little of submission. Flushed with a series of successes, he gave battle to the Mughal army at the pass of Khamnor which had often been moistened with the blood of Rajput warriors, and completely defeated it. It fled towards Ajmer, pursued with great havoc by the Rajputs. The Mughal historian too admits it to have been a glorious day for Mewar. He describes

in detail how Parvez got entangled in the passes, how dissensions broke out in his camp and his supplies were cut off, how he was attacked under these disadvantages and finally how he had to fly precipitately with huge losses. His son who, under the guidance of Mahabat Khan, continued the campaign after him, was routed and slain.

The strength and resources of the Mughal Empire were so vast that a few defeats mattered little to it. But every victory—won at the cost of tremendous loss of life—left Mewar weaker than ever. Rana Amar had fought seventeen pitched battles against powerful Mughal armies since the death of his illustrious father, and the loss of experienced veterans had every time withered the laurels of victory. Sorrow and lamentation had always marred the songs of triumph in Mewar. The Rana never had sufficient time and opportunity to recoup the losses incurred in any of these battles, to rear the younger generations to replace the older ones or to develop the resources of his country. Now another and yet more mighty army was sent under Prince Khurram, the ablest of the sons of Jahangir. The Rana tried, as usual, to collect an army. The drums beat to arms and the bards sang stirring war-songs; but

the 'might of their hills' had disappeared. There were few grown-up men in Mewar which was now a land of children and women, and only a handful of warriors responded to the call of their king and their country. The Rana met the host of Delhi with this small band and lost several actions in rapid succession. Part of his equipage and some of his elephants fell into the hands of Khurram after the very first engagement. Mewar was soon overrun by the Mughal army and many of the Rajput strongholds were garrisoned with Mughal troops. It was now clear that further resistance on the part of the Rana was inadvisable, that it meant unnecessary bloodshed and that submission was the only course left open to him. The Mughal general realised the position of the Rana, and his heart was filled with sympathy for the heroic Amar. Himself the son of a Rajput princess of Marwar, he was an admirer of Rajput valour and a respecter of Rajput sentiments. Familiar with the history of the Sisodiyas who had never submitted to foreign power, and knowing of the dying command of Rana Pratap, Khurram merely asked for the friendship of Amar as the price of peace, and agreed to withdraw every Mughal soldier from Mewar if the Rana would but receive the Emperor's

firman outside the walls of his capital. Seldom has subjugated royalty met with such consideration ; yet to a lofty mind like Amar's, this only increased the bitterness of the surrender. The *firman* was an imperial decree in token of submission, and as he pondered over the terms of the Mughal Prince,—mild though they were,—visions of the past glory of Mewar flitted across his mind's eye, along with the scene of Pratap's death. His great heart almost broke to think that the flag which, for more than eight hundred years, had waved in proud independence over the heads of the Gehlotes, must now be hauled down to the Mughals. The noble Amar who

“ Rather than be less,
Cared not to be at all,—”

felt that he would be an unworthy son of Pratap and false to his memory, if he were to rule under the *firman* of the Emperor. As peace was impossible except on the condition mentioned by the Mughal general, Amar decided to abdicate when it was concluded. Two of his chiefs were sent to Prince Khurram with the message that the Rana would meet him as a friend to pay his

respects, but that on account of his age he was unable to wait on the Emperor in person and his son Karna would attend the imperial court.

Soon the Rana visited Prince Khurram in his camp. Karna saw the Prince immediately after and was introduced to the Emperor at Ajmer on the same day, when he was honoured with presents and titles.

Jahangir thus describes graphically and with a wealth of detail the submission of Rana Amar and the presentation of Karna at his court:—
“ On the commencement of the ninth year (1614 A.D.), while I was seated on my throne (at Ajmer), in an auspicious moment, the elephant Alam Guman with seventeen others, male and female, captured from the Rana, was sent by my son Khurram and presented before me. The next day I went abroad, mounted on Alam Guman, to my great satisfaction, and distributed gold in large quantities.

“ Pleasing intelligence soon arrived of the intention of Rana Amar Singh to come to terms. My fortunate son had established my authority and garrisons in diverse strongholds of the Rana's country which, owing to the malign influence of its climate, it was deemed impossible to bring under subjection. The perpetual overrunning of the

country by my armies without regard to the heat or the rains, and the capture and imprisonment of the wives and children of many of the men of rank, at last forced the Rana to realise that a further continuance of hostilities would be attended with utter ruin, with the choice of captivity or being forced to abandon the country. He therefore determined to submit and sent two of his chiefs, Subhkaran and Haridas Jhala, to my son Khurram to represent that if he would forgive him and take him by the hand, he would pay his respects to him and would send his eldest son Karna to wait on the Emperor, as did the other Hindu princes, but that on account of his years, he would hold himself excused from attending in person.

“ I greatly rejoiced at this event happening in my own reign, and I commanded that these ancient possessors of Mewar should not be driven from it. Rana Amar Singh and his ancestors were proud and were confident in the strength and inaccessibility of their mountainous country and its strongholds and had never beheld a king of Hindusthan, nor submitted to any one. I was desirous, in my own fortunate time, that the opportunity should not slip from my hands. Instantly therefore on the representation of my son, I forgave the Rana and sent a gracious *firman* that he might rest

assured of my protection and care, and impressed on it, as a solemn testimony of my sincerity, the mark of my auspicious palm. I also wrote a letter to my son, asking him to treat this illustrious ruler, in every possible way, according to his heart's wishes.

“ My son despatched the letter and the *firman* through the chiefs Subhkaran and Haridas Jhala to the Rana, with a request that relying on my generosity and esteem, he might receive my *firman* with the impress of my palm, and it was agreed that on the 26th of the month of *Bahman* he should repair to my son.

“ On Sunday the 26th the Rana with due attention to etiquette paid his respects to my son and presented as tribute a celebrated ruby, various arms inlaid with gold, seven elephants of great price (all that remained to him after the capture of Alam Guman and 17 others) and nine horses. My son received him with princely generosity and courtesy, gave him every kind assurance of protection and presented him with suitable *khilats*, elephants, horses and a sword. As the Rana had not above 100 persons in his train worthy to be dignified with *khilats*, he gave one hundred *sarupa*, fifty horses and twelve jewelled *khapwa*. The custom however of these princes being that

the heir and the father never came together, the Rana observed this usage, and Karna, his declared successor, did not accompany him. Sultan Khurram gave the Rana leave to send his son on the same day, and he was introduced soon after, and a *khilat*, an elephant, a horse with a gold saddle, swords and daggers were bestowed on him. The same day Khurram came with him to me.

“In my interview with Sultan Khurram on his arrival at Ajmer, he represented that if it was my pleasure, he would present Prince Karna whom I accordingly asked him to bring. He arrived, paid his respects, and his rank was commanded to be, at the request of my son, immediately on my right hand, and I rewarded him with suitable *khilats*. As Karna, owing to the rude life he had led in his native hills, was extremely shy, and unused to the pageantry of a court, in order to reconcile him I gave him daily some testimony of my regard and confidence. On the second day of his service, I gave him a jewelled dagger and on the third a choice steed of Irak with rich caparisons. On the same day I took him with me to the Queen’s court when the Queen Nur Jahan gave him splendid *khilats*, swords, an elephant and horses. The same day

I gave him a rich necklace of pearls and another day an elephant, and it was my wish to give him rarities and choice things of every kind. When I gave Karna leave to return to his *jagir*, I bestowed on him an elephant, a horse and a pearl necklace valued at 50,000 rupees. From the day of his repairing to my court to that of his departure, the value of the various gifts I presented him with exceeded ten lakhs of rupees, exclusive of 110 horses, five elephants and what my son Khurram gave him. I despatched Mubarik Khan along with him, and through him I sent an elephant, a horse and various confidential messages to the Rana.

“ On the 24th *Muharram* of the tenth year of my reign, Jagat Singh, son of Karna, aged twelve years, arrived at court and paid his respects. His countenance carried the impression of his illustrious extraction, and I delighted his heart with presents and kindness.

“ On the 28th *Rabiul-Akhir* of the eleventh year of my reign, I commanded that the statues of the Rana and Karna, sculptured in white marble, with the dates of their construction carved on them, should be placed in the gardens at Agra.”

In this simple narrative the royal historian bears ample testimony to the gallant and protract-

ed resistance offered by the Rajputs, and he does full justice to Amar in the statement that he did not yield until he had only two alternatives left open to him, *viz.*, captivity and exile. With a magnanimity beyond all praise, he records the Rajput Rana's 'salvo for his dignity'—"that he would hold himself excused from attending his court in person." There is a heart-stirring philanthropy in the conduct of Jahangir, which does him immortal honour, and in commanding his son to treat "the illustrious ruler according to his heart's wishes," he proved himself worthy of his high position. He shews his sense of the superiority of the chief of all the Rajputs by placing the heir of Mewar above all the princes of his own house, "immediately on his right hand." Whether he attempts to relieve the shyness of Karna or to set forth the princely appearance of Jagat Singh, we see the same amiable feelings operating to lighten the chains of the conquered.

After the conclusion of peace with the Emperor Jahangir, Amar one day (in the year 1616 A.D.) assembled his chiefs in his palace and disclosed his determination to abdicate in favour of his son. Karna was then installed as the Rana and the *tika* was put on his forehead by Amar who asked him to bear in mind that the

honour of Mewar was now in his hands. Amar forthwith left the capital and retired to the secluded Nauchauki where he confined himself till his death in 1620 A.D.

Comments on the character of Rana Amar are superfluous. Pratap had a worthy son and Mewar a worthy ruler in him. He possessed all the physical and mental attributes of a hero and was the tallest and strongest of all the rulers of Mewar. He was not so fair as they usually were, and he had a reserve bordering on melancholy, which was doubtless caused by worries and reverses during the latter part of his reign.

CHAPTER XI

KARNA AND JAGAT

Rana Karna succeeded the last independent king of Mewar in 1620 A.D. With his accession the wars against the Mughal Empire came to a close. The Sisodiya sword was sheathed and the horrors of battle disappeared from Mewar. Peace and tranquillity continued for half a century till a fresh war broke out between Raj Singh and Aurangzeb.

Karna had courage as well as enthusiasm. He had given ample proof of both in his younger days when he once cut through the Mughal ranks with great rapidity and surprised and plundered Surat. The booty he carried off relieved, for the time being, the pecuniary difficulties of Mewar and prolonged its resistance to the arms of Jahangir. But he had now little scope for the display of martial qualities, and he put forth his talents to retrieve the past losses of Mewar. He fortified the heights around his capital which was further strengthened with a wall and a ditch, enlarged the noble dam which retained the water of Lake Pichola and made additions to the palace.

The feelings of regard and friendship which now linked Rana Karna and the Emperor Jahangir through Prince Khurram created a new atmosphere for the Sisodiya chieftains who soon distinguished themselves as supporters of the Mughal Empire and had a full share of power at the Mughal court. Bhim Singh, the younger brother of Karna, who headed the contingent from Mewar at Delhi, was very conspicuous amongst them and in time came to be the chief adviser and friend of Prince Khurram. Two Saktawat chiefs, Man Singh and Gokuldas, were reported to be the Prince's most trusted lieutenants. Bhim was brave and ambitious. At his son's request, the Emperor conferred on him the title of Raja and assigned to him a small principality of which Toda-Bhim was the capital. Bhim built a new city and a palace on the banks of the river Banas which flowed through his territory. The palace was named Rajmahal, and its ruins still exist to bear testimony to the architectural taste of this son of Mewar. Bhim was however more friendly to Prince Khurram than to his father or to the Mughal Empire. This was obviously due to the Prince's sympathy for the Sisodiyas and to his courtesy and kindness in dealing with them. Bhim also detested, with all the vehemence of his

ardent nature, Prince Parvez who had invaded Mewar before Khurram and failed in spite of the ruthlessness of his campaign. As Khurram was the son of a Rajput mother, the Mewar chief sympathised with his secret aspirations after the crown of Timur to the prejudice of his elder brother Parvez who had no Rajput blood flowing in his veins. Jahangir had an inkling of Bhim's mentality and, in order to separate him from Khurram, appointed him Governor of Gujarat. But Bhim refused the honour and advised Khurram to act at once if he aspired to be the Emperor. The impatient Prince threw off the mask and suddenly took up arms, and Parvez was slain. Khurram was also secretly supported by a strong party of Rajputs who were the vassals of the Mughal Emperor, including Raja Guj Singh of Marwar. Guj Singh however was very cautious and discreetly timid, and he decided to remain outwardly neutral when Jahangir advanced to crush the incipient revolt. Suspicious of his treachery, the Emperor superseded the claims of Guj and gave the command of his van to the Raja of Amber. When the armies approached and joined battle, Guj Singh, following his previous decision, furlled his banners and stood by with his forces at a distance. The battle was a critical one and its

issue depended on the help of Guj. Bhim felt disgusted at his inactivity and, unable to check himself, challenged the Raja either to aid or to oppose him. Stung by the insult, Guj adopted the latter course and joined the forces of Jahangir. Bhim's party was destroyed and Bhim himself was slain. Khurram and Mahabat Khan were compelled to seek refuge in Udaipur where Rana Karna received them with great kindness. The Rana recalled the days when Khurram, as the victorious Mughal general, had begged only for his father's friendship as the price of peace and treated him with a gentleness and courtesy never shewn by any conqueror to the defeated enemy. He was now eager to repay his magnanimity. Though the Ranas of Mewar had strong prejudices against Muslims, apartments in the royal palace were assigned to Khurram and his followers. Later a sumptuous edifice was built on an island in the Udai Sagar for his residence. It was adorned with a lofty dome and crowned with the crescent, and was in all respects worthy of the Mughal Prince of Delhi. The interior was decorated with mosaic and with precious stones of many varieties, while the floor was covered with rich Turkish carpets. A throne carved from a single block of serpentine and supported by

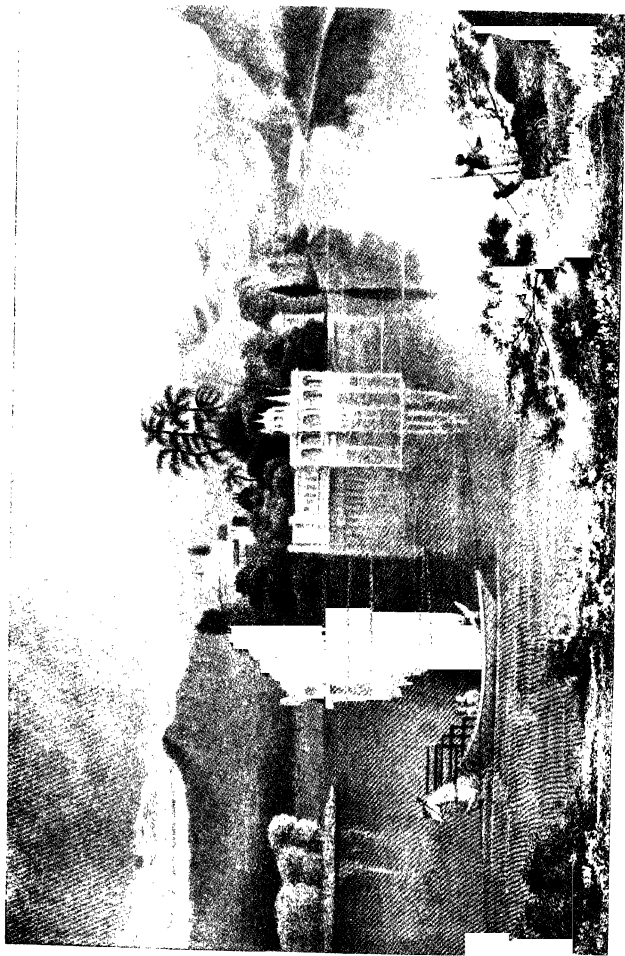
caryatids was placed in the hall which looked like a royal audience-chamber. In the courtyard a mosque was erected to the memory of the saint Madar. So excellent were the arrangements for ministering to the needs of the royal guest and for maintaining his dignity, that he could never feel for a moment that he was a refugee in a distant country and amongst strangers.

This expression of Rajput gratitude to Khurram is indeed touching. The magnanimous Prince highly appreciated it, and in order to perpetuate the bond of love and friendship with Mewar, he exchanged his turban and shield with those of Rana Karna. It is remarkable that the feelings of the Rana were not transient ; far from expiring with the progress of time, “the debt immense of endless gratitude” was transmitted to his issue. Though three centuries have passed, during which Mewar has suffered every kind of misfortune,—has been pillaged by Mughals, Afghans and Mahrattas,—yet the turban of Prince Khurram, the symbol of fraternity, has been carefully preserved, and remains in the same folds to-day as when transferred from the head of the Mughal Prince to that of the Rajput Rana. The shield is yet regarded as the most sacred of relics,

nor will the lamp in the mosque of Madar want oil while the princes of Udaipur have the means to supply it.

Khurram lived on at Udaipur till a short time before his father's death. He next went to Golkonda in the Deccan. Jahangir died in 1627 A.D. and Karna was succeeded by Rana Jagat Singh on the throne of Mewar in 1628. The latter sent his own brother with a band of Rajputs to Khurram to inform him of Jahangir's death and to escort him to Udaipur. On arrival he was first saluted as the Emperor Shah Jahan in the Badal Mahal ("the cloud saloon") of the Rana's palace by the satraps and princes of the Empire.

Rana Jagat Singh was a highly respected prince. The dignity of his character and his benevolence secured the homage of all who had access to him, and are alike attested by the pen of the Mughal Emperor, the ambassador of England and the chroniclers of Mewar. He reigned for about twenty-six years in peace and tranquillity. Jagat tried to redeem the ancient capital Chitor from the effects of the repeated attacks, and rebuilt many parts of the ruined fortress and its temples. He devoted himself to the cultivation of architecture and the fine arts, and Udaipur is indebted to this ruler for some magnificent architectural



PALACE OF JAGMANDIR ON AN ISLAND IN LAKE PICHOLA NEAR UDAIPUR

works which still excite admiration. Jagniwas, the beautiful palace on Lake Pichola, was entirely built by him, while Jagmandir, another palace on one of its islets, was improved and enlarged. Nothing but marble enters into their composition ; columns, baths, reservoirs, fountains are all of this material, often inlaid with mosaics. Light passing through variously coloured glasses gives a beautiful appearance to their apartments, the walls of which are decorated with historical paintings in water-colours and with medallions in considerable relief in gypsum, depicting the principal events in successive royal families. Outside there are flower-beds, orange and lemon groves shaded by the wide-spreading tamarind and the magnificent evergreen *khirni*, while the graceful palmyra and the cocoa-nut wave their plume-like branches over the plantain and the dark cypress. Extensive baths and detached colonnaded refectories meant for the chiefs, are to be seen even to-day on the water's edge. Here they listened to the tales of the bards and slept off their noon-day opiate, with the cool breeze of the lake wafting delicious odours from myriads of lotus-flowers which covered its surface. As the fumes of the potion evaporated, they opened their eyes on

a landscape to which not even the fancies of their stupefied dreams could frame an equal—the broad waters of Pichola with its indented and well-wooded margin, receding to the horizon where a gorgeous temple looked on a pass of the gigantic Aravalli, the field of the exploits of their forefathers. In the midst of this scene did the Sisodiya princes and chieftains live for two generations, exchanging the din of arms for voluptuous inactivity.

CHAPTER XII

RANA RAJ SINGH

Rana Raj Singh, the eldest son of Jagat, ascended the throne in 1652 A.D. About ten years after his accession, famine and pestilence of a virulent type broke out in Mewar. There was no rainfall during the months of June and July in 1662, and the next two months also passed away in drought. The ground was parched, and rivers, lakes and fountains dried up. There was not a speck of cloud in the sky, and thunder and lightning were unknown. The constellations were always visible at night, and the portent filled all with dread. Crops failed, and the people of the fertile land of Mewar went mad with hunger and thirst. The husband abandoned the wife, and the wife the husband, while parents sold their children. Time only aggravated the evil which spread far and wide. Thousands of men and women of all ages were victims to starvation. Even insects died in large numbers, for they had nothing to feed on.

The rich tried to help the famished people by distributing food, but their stock was limited and the relief was scanty and had to be confined to a very few. The struggle for food was piteous and the '*Chaturbarnas*' threw away all symbols of separation in their scrambles for a morsel of bread, all distinctions of caste and creed being lost in hunger. Ministers of religion forgot their duties. Those who could procure food ate more than nature required after a period of fasting. Those who could not, appeased the cravings of hunger with fruits, flowers, roots and even the bark of trees. Sometimes men ate men. The result was the outbreak of an epidemic which wiped out numerous families and even depopulated entire cities.

Rana Raj Singh was deeply moved by the extreme distress in his state and meditated plans for relief. The extent and magnitude of the ravages were such that no ordinary measures could be expected to cope with them. He decided on the formation of an inland lake about two miles from the base of the Aravalli. A small stream flowing from these mountains was arrested in its course, about 25 miles to the north of the capital, by means of an embankment and made to form the lake called, after the Rana

himself, Rajsamund (royal sea). The *bund* or dam forms an irregular segment of a circle, and is entirely of white marble, with a flight of steps of the same material. On the southern side are the town and the fortress, also built by the Rana and named after him. On the embankment stands the shrine of one of the seven forms of Krishna. One million, one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling contributed by the Rana, his chiefs and wealthy subjects were spent on the work. But magnificent and useful as it is, it derives its chief fascination from the benevolent motive to which it owed its origin, which was to alleviate the miseries of a starving people and make their employment conducive to national prosperity.

Mewar had not fully recovered from the effects of the famine and the pestilence, when it was involved in a war which continued till the death of Raj Singh. Various causes over which the Rana had no control, combined with his personal character to break the peace his country had so long been enjoying. The Emperor Shah Jahan who had reached extreme old age, had been seriously ill for some time, and the ambition of three of his sons to usurp his throne involved every Rajput prince in war in support of the claims of one or other of the rivals. Akbar's policy of uniting the

indigenous races with the Mughals through matrimonial connection had borne fruit during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan ; for never was the Mughal Empire so secure as during these periods and no Emperor of Delhi was so much liked by the Hindus as Jahangir and Shah Jahan—the one born of a Rajput princess of Amber and the other of a princess of Marwar. Aurangzeb's unmixed Tartar blood brought no Rajput sympathies to his aid when he made a bid for the throne. Rana Raj Singh inclined to Shah Jahan, the old and devoted friend of Mewar, and, in consequence, to Dara, his beloved son and legitimate heir ; and practically the whole Rajput race endorsed his action. As a matter of fact, in the wars that followed almost every noble Rajput family shed its best blood in defence of Shah Jahan's authority while there was any hope of success, and in opposing Aurangzeb. The battle of Fatehabad however silenced every rival pretension and gave to Aurangzeb the advantage which he maintained till he ascended the throne of Delhi.

Aurangzeb was not blind to the weakness of his position in the eyes of the Hindus, and he tried to remove it by marrying a Rajput princess himself and linking his family with some

Rajput chiefs through matrimonial ties. Thus Shah Alam, his son, and one of his favourite grandsons had Rajput mothers' blood flowing in their veins. But Aurangzeb neutralised the possible effect of his action through his own policy. Seldom have so many distinguished Rajput princes been contemporaries as during his reign. Every Rajput state had now a head far above mediocrity in ability as well as in courage. Jai Singh of Amber, Jashowant Singh of Marwar, the Raja of Bikaner and the Prince of Bundi were allies who, if their prejudices and sentiments had been respected, would have been towers of strength to his Empire and would have contributed largely to its prosperity. But the Emperor had the same measure of contempt and distrust for all his vassal chiefs most of whom were thus estranged from him. Jashowant Singh suddenly died at Kabul, and there was a wide-spread suspicion of foul play. Aurangzeb feared that if his infant sons reached Marwar soon, they might form the nucleus of a party against him in Rajasthan and might grow up to be the most deadly enemies of the Mughal Empire. He therefore ordered their arrest at Delhi on their way back to Marwar from Kabul. Along with their mother,

they were in the charge of Durgadas, a gallant Rathor chief of Jashowant, who had only 250 men at his disposal. A Mughal army attacked this small party, but the 250 Rajputs performed a miracle and held at bay 5,000 Mughal soldiers in a street in Delhi, while the family of Jashowant escaped safely to Rajputana. The mother of Ajit, 'the infant heir of Marwar,' was a princess of Mewar, and she threw herself and her son upon the protection of Rana Raj Singh as their natural guardian. He readily assigned a fortress as a sanctuary for the boy, where he lived under the immediate care of Durgadas, while his mother—a woman of grim determination—went over to Marwar to foment a spirit of resistance against Aurangzeb. A union of interests was thus brought about between the two principal states of Rajasthan against the Mughal Empire, which would have been impossible during the reign of Jahangir or of Shah Jahan. The detention of Sivaji at Delhi was similarly responsible for Aurangzeb's unpopularity amongst the Mahrattas and their declaration of independence.

Constant warfare had in the meantime exhausted his treasury and, by damaging the economic condition of the country, also affected his revenues. Financial difficulty now induced

Aurangzeb to impose a capitation tax on Hindus. This was called the *jizya*. It was so contrary to all notions of sound policy that "reflection seeks the motive with amazement." Opposition to the measure came from Rana Raj Singh who, in the name of the race of which he was the head, thought it fit to remonstrate with the Emperor in a letter which may challenge comparison with any that has ever been written in any age or country. It is couched in a dignified style and breathes a spirit of lofty benevolence and toleration mingled with "soul-stirring rebuke" and temperate, yet firm, determination. It runs as follows:—

"Although I, your well-wisher, have separated myself from your sublime presence, I am nevertheless zealous in the performance of every bounden act of obedience and loyalty. Reflecting therefore on my former services and your Majesty's condescension, I presume to invite the royal attention to some circumstances in which public as well as private welfare is greatly concerned.

"I have been informed that enormous sums have been dissipated in the prosecution of the designs formed against me, your well-wisher, and

that you have ordered a tribute to be levied to replenish your exhausted treasury.

“ Your royal ancestor Mahomed Jelaul ul Deen Akbar, whose throne is now in heaven, conducted the affairs of this Empire in equity and firm sincerity for the space of fifty-two years, preserving every tribe of men in ease and happiness, whether they were followers of Jesus, of Moses or of Mahomed. Were they Brahmins, were they of the sect which denies the eternity of matter, or of that which ascribes the existence of the world to chance, they all equally enjoyed his countenance and favour.

“ His Majesty Mahomed Noor ul Deen Jahangir, likewise, whose dwelling is now in paradise, extended for a period of twenty-two years the shadow of his protection over the heads of his people. Nor less did the illustrious Shah Jahan, by a propitious reign of thirty-two years, acquire to himself immortal reputation, the glorious reward of clemency and virtue.

“ Such were the benevolent inclinations of your ancestors. Whilst they pursued these great and generous principles, they reduced many countries and fortresses to their obedience. During your Majesty's reign, many have been alienated. Every province of your Empire is impoverished.

Depopulation spreads and difficulties accumulate. As to the soldiery, they are murmuring, and the merchants are complaining.

“How can the dignity of the sovereign be preserved who employs his power in exacting heavy tributes from a people thus reduced to misery? At this juncture it is told from east to west, that the Emperor of Hindusthan, jealous of the poor devotee, will exact a tribute from Brahmins, Joghies, Berawghies, Sanyasis; that regardless of the honour of his Timurean race, he condescends to exercise his power over the solitary, inoffensive hermit. If your Majesty places any faith in those books, by distinction called divine, you will there be instructed that God is the God of all mankind. The Pagan and the Mussulman are equally in His presence. Distinctions of colour are of His ordination. It is He who gives existence. In your mosques, to His name the voice is raised in prayer; in a house of images, where the bell is shaken, still He is the object of adoration.

“In fine, the tribute you demand is repugnant to justice: it is equally foreign to good policy, as it must impoverish the country: moreover it is an innovation and an infringement of the laws of Hindusthan. But if zeal for your own religion has induced you to determine upon

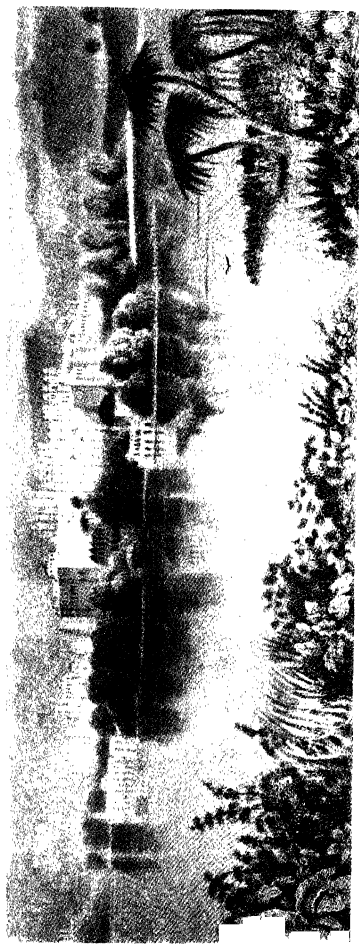
this measure, the demand ought, by the rules of equity, to have been made first upon Ram Singh who is esteemed the principal amongst the Hindus. Then let your well-wisher be called upon, whom you may encounter with less difficulty; but to torment ants and flies is unworthy of a heroic or generous mind. It is surprising that the ministers of your government should have neglected to instruct your Majesty in the rules of rectitude and honour."

About this time Aurangzeb demanded the hand of the princess of Rupnagar, a fief in the north of Mewar. She was celebrated for her exquisite beauty. Her father Bikram Solanki belonged to a junior branch of the house of Marwar. He was too timid and too powerless to reject the demand of the Emperor: but his daughter refused to be the wife of Aurangzeb. Probably she had been attracted by the courage and abilities of Rana Raj Singh who once successfully crossed swords with the head of her family. Following the brilliant precedents for the choice of a husband by princesses, which were so numerous in the history of her country, she decided to entrust her cause to the arms of the Rana, offering herself as the reward of his protection. The family priest deemed it an honour to be her

messenger, and the letter he carried to Raj Singh is still preserved. It concluded with a threat of self-destruction if she were denied protection. A Mughal army of two thousand horse soon appeared at Rupnagar to escort the princess to the imperial capital, and in due course commenced its return journey with her. But her appeal to Raj Singh had not fallen on deaf ears. With a chosen band the Rana rapidly passed the foot of the Aravalli and suddenly appeared before Rupnagar, cut up the imperial guards and bore off the princess to his capital. This exploit was looked upon as an omen of success in the war that was sure to follow, and the daring act was applauded by all who bore the name of Rajput. The chiefs readily gathered their men around the standard of the Rana with a dogged determination to protect the princess so gallantly won.

The capture of this princess, along with the Rana's letter on the *jizya* and the shelter given to Ajit, was responsible for the war that broke out. Aurangzeb's preparations resembled those for the conquest of a mighty empire rather than for the subjugation of a Rajput prince who held his estate under the Mughal Emperor's *firman*. In the very magnitude of these preparations, the

suzerain of Hindusthan gave the highest praise to the tributary Rajput. He denuded the distant provinces of his Empire to assemble a host which appeared irresistible. Akbar was recalled from Bengal, Azam from distant Kabul and Muazzam (the Emperor's heir) from the Deccan. With this formidable army, the Emperor entered Mewar and soon occupied the plains which were indefensible and from which the inhabitants had previously retired to the hills. Chitor and other strongholds were easily subdued and garrisoned with Mughal troops. Meanwhile the Rana was making his preparations in the defiles of the Aravalli where he meditated a resistance proportioned to the peril which threatened every cherished prejudice of his race—not the mere defence of dominion or dignity, but a struggle for hearth and home to which rallied every Rajput with the most deadly determination. Even the primitive races of the western wilds, with thousands of bows and hearts devoted to Hindupat, assembled around the crimson banner of Mewar. The Rana divided his forces into three main bodies. His eldest son Jai Singh was posted on the crest of the Aravalli with one of these, ready to swoop down on the invaders on either side of the range. With the second contingent Prince Bhim was sent to the



EAST VIEW OF THE PALACE OF UDAIPUR

west to keep up the communication with Gujarat, while the Rana, with the main body, took up his position by the Nai defile, unassailable by the enemy and hanging on his left flank, ready to cut off all retreat the moment the imperial army entered the mountains. This plan had been suggested by the Saktawat chief Gharib Das. His speech explaining his tactics has been reported in the annals and was thus concluded: "Let the Emperor have free entrance through the passes, shut him in and make famine his foe." His advice was literally followed in the case of Prince Akbar with the result he had anticipated.

The valley where the capital of Mewar is situated has almost the form of a circle when viewed from the city and is therefore called the *girwa* or the 'circle.' In reality however it is an irregular ellipse about 14 miles in length from north to south and about 11 miles in breadth from east to west. The mountains surrounding this valley are from eight to twelve hundred feet in height. Udaipur, the capital, is situated close to these mountains with only Lake Pichola intervening. There are three passes leading from the valley to the plains to the east—the first, the northern, by Delwara; the second, the central, by Debari; the third,

the southern, that of Nai. Aurangzeb advanced to Debari, but instead of himself entering the valley of which it was the gateway, he halted and according to the advice of one of his experienced generals, Tahawwar Khan, sent Prince Akbar with fifty thousand men to march upon Udaipur. This precaution on the part of the Emperor saved him from the plight in which Akbar soon found himself.

The Prince advanced. Not a soul interrupted his progress to the city. Palaces, gardens, lakes and islets met his eye, but no living thing ; all was silence. He was not much astonished, for such evacuation was common and might have been due to the desire of the people to avoid a turbulent soldiery. He encamped, and his men were lulled into a sense of absolute security. "Some were praying, some feasting, some at chess: they came to steal and yet fell asleep," says the annalist. At dead of night they were surprised by Jai Singh and were dispersed with terrific and unrelenting slaughter. Cut off from the possibility of a junction with the Emperor by a movement on the part of the Rana's forces, Akbar attempted a retreat to the plains of Marwar by the route of Gogunda to the west. It was a choice of evils, but he made the worst.

choice. The mountain tribes and the Bhils outstripped the Mughals who had entered one of the long-extended valleys termed *Nal*, which was closed by a natural rampart. On this they heaped trunks of big trees which were felled with incredible rapidity, and made egress impossible for the Mughals. Jai Singh's troops in like manner blocked up the entrance to the valley and barred retreat. They also manned the crests of the hills on either side and hurled destruction on the enemy below. Starvation soon stared the whole army in the face, and it had only the prospect of surrender to save it from famine and the vengeance of the Rajputs. It was Jai Singh's humanity that at last saved it from utter annihilation ; for he listened to the Prince's overtures for peace, believed in his promise to remove the ' cause of the war ' and gave him guides to conduct his army through the intricate defiles of the Aravalli till it reached the walls of Chitor.

Another branch of the imperial army led by the famous general Dilir Khan tried to enter the valley of Udaipur from Marwar through the Desuri Pass. Its object was to bring relief to Akbar and to rescue his army, if possible. It was allowed to pass unopposed, like Akbar's army,

till it entered a long, intricate gorge, when it was attacked by two intrepid chiefs, Bikram Solanki (of Rupnagar) and Gopinath Rathor, and was entirely destroyed after a desperate conflict. Much booty fell into the hands of the Rajputs. These two defeats were the signal for a combined attack by the Rana and his lieutenants on Aurangzeb himself, who, with his son Azam, was awaiting at Debari the results of the operations under Akbar and Dilir. On this occasion the gallant Marwar chief Durgadas, with the Rathor swords whetted by an accumulation of wrongs, joined the great home-clans to fight against the common enemy. Nobly did they contest the palm of glory, and the Emperor could not withstand them. Even his guns, manned as they were by the Franks, could not protect him against the avenging steel of the Rajputs. He was completely beaten and put to flight, with an immense loss of men and equipment, and the imperial standard with some elephants and state equipage fell into the hands of the Rajputs. But the Rana, victorious as he was, had to lament the loss of many brave chiefs who perished in this glorious encounter (1680 A.D.). The discomfited Mughal forces under Aurangzeb and Akbar met near the walls of Chitor.

The Emperor was so much upset by these reverses that he thought it necessary to strengthen this army at once. Prince Muazzam who had been fighting against Sivaji and had not been able to obey the call of the Emperor hitherto, was urgently sent for from the Deccan. Meanwhile Sawaldas, a descendant of Jaimall, the illustrious defender of Chitor against the Emperor Akbar, cut off the communications between Chitor and Ajmer, the headquarters of Aurangzeb. This put him in a difficulty. He therefore quitted Mewar and at once repaired to Ajmer with his personal guards, leaving this perilous warfare to his sons Akbar and Azam, with instructions how to act till reinforced. Soon afterwards he despatched an experienced general at the head of twelve thousand men, with supplies and equipment for his sons. But Sawaldas was alert and fell upon this body, defeating it completely and driving it back to Ajmer with the help of the contingent from Marwar.

While the Rana, his heir (Jai Singh) and his allies were thus triumphant everywhere, Prince Bhim was not idle. He created a diversion in favour of the Rajputs by his invasion of Gujarat, during which he captured Idar, expelled its garrison and plundered Patan, the capital of the

provincial Mughal satrap. After sacking a number of rich cities, Bhim marched on Surat. But the suffering inhabitants and fugitives approached the Rana who, touched with their miseries, recalled Bhim in the midst of his career. During this campaign the Rajputs committed excesses against the defeated army as well as in the conquered territories. Dayal Sah, the civil minister of the Rana and a man of high courage and talents, led an army into Malwa which was ravaged mercilessly. Many towns were plundered and numerous garrisons put to the sword. To use the words of the chronicles, "Husbands abandoned their wives and children, and whatever could not be carried off, was consigned to the flames." The minister was unrelenting and made Malwa a desert and, with the booty taken in his raids, repaired the resources of his master. Flushed with success, he next effected a junction with Jai Singh and gave battle to Azam near Chitor, beyond the Aravalli mountains. The flower of Mewar and the bravest of the Rathors of Marwar were engaged in this action, and the result was a glorious victory, the Mughal army being defeated and pursued with great slaughter to Ranthambhor. The war against Mewar now terminated. But to

secure the rights and personal safety of the minor heir of Jashowant, which had been threatened by Aurangzeb, the Rana again united his army with the forces of Marwar, and started a campaign in Godwar. The heroic mother of Ajit had for some time been preparing his subjects for a struggle against the Mughals, and the opportunity now came of asserting the full rights of Marwar against the Emperor. Prince Bhim readily seized it, and the combined armies under his leadership defeated the imperial forces under Akbar and Tahawwar Khan.

Encouraged by successes which had not favoured the arms of Mewar for generations, the Rana and his allies formed a plan of dethroning Aurangzeb and setting up Akbar in his place. His father's treatment of Shah Jahan was fresh in the memory of all, and the pernicious example was not lost upon Akbar. The lure of the crown was too strong for him, and he favourably received the overtures of the Rajputs. As a result, he permitted the union of his army with the Rajput forces. All arrangements were completed for proclaiming Akbar Emperor of India, and the astrologer even fixed the day for his coronation. But it was this man who

betrayed the secret to Aurangzeb. The latter was at Ajmer, attended only by his personal guards. Akbar was within a day's march, while Muazzam and Azam, with their forces, were still far away. The combined Rajput and Mughal forces might fall upon the Emperor at any moment. He realised the magnitude of the danger ahead ; but danger never deprived him of his judgment and ready wit. Not a moment was to be lost, and the Emperor had to take recourse to an artifice to save himself. He penned a letter which was addressed to Akbar, and was dropped by one of his spies in the tent of the Rathor leader Durgadas. In this Aurangzeb pretended to applaud the scheme according to which Akbar was to fall upon the Rajputs from behind when they attacked the Emperor. The trick succeeded in rousing suspicions in the minds of the Rajputs against Akbar, and they detached themselves from the Prince who had apparently betrayed them but for whom they had been prepared to shed their life-blood. Akbar's lieutenant Tahawwar Khan, in desperation, tried to assassinate the Emperor and lost his life in the attempt. Before the Rajputs could discover the truth, reinforcements under Muazzam and Azam had arrived, and the Emperor

was saved. Akbar still enjoyed the protection of his allies, but felt that he was not safe in the neighbourhood of his father who never forgave an offence against himself. Escorted by a band of five hundred Rajputs under Durgadas who cut his way through Mughal opposition in the defiles of Mewar, he crossed over to the Deccan to seek the protection of Sambhaji. Soon afterwards he sailed for Persia in an English ship.

When Aurangzeb heard that Prince Akbar had gone to Sambhaji, he felt uneasy and grew eager for a treaty with the Rajputs, so that he might gather strength for a war with the Mahrattas exclusively. Vanity stood in the way of his making any overtures to the Rana, but a Rajput officer who had long served with distinction under Dilir Khan, solved the difficulty by agreeing to act as an intermediary. He saw the Rana and convinced him that the mighty Emperor was really anxious for peace, though his position rendered it difficult for him to ask for it. The negotiations were unduly prolonged, but at last the terms of a treaty were settled, which were on the whole favourable to Mewar and Marwar. Though the poll-tax was not dropped for the present, the Emperor agreed to respect Hindu sentiments, to

restore to Mewar, Chitor and its surrounding districts recently occupied by him and to recognise as the prince of Marwar the heir of Jashowant whose champion the Rana had become. But before the treaty could be actually concluded, Rana Raj Singh died of his wounds, his life's work only partially accomplished (1680 A.D.).

This patriotic ruler of Mewar extorts the reader's admiration and homage next to his illustrious ancestor Pratap, just as for talents and abilities, his adversary Aurangzeb, amongst the Emperors of Delhi, attracts notice after Akbar, the worthy opponent of Pratap. There can however be no comparison between the Rajput Rana and the Mughal Emperor—the one the head of a petty state and the other the lord of a vast continent. In intellectual vigour and statecraft, in that concentration of the mind which confides its deep purpose to none, in every attribute of the warrior and the scholar, Aurangzeb had no superior—hardly any equal—even amongst the many distinguished descendants of Timur. But without his great mental powers and resources, Raj Singh could yet withstand the might of this puissant Emperor. The Rana's humanity easily attracts notice. Even when his most effective means of self-defence lay in the destruction of the resources

of a conquered province, sympathy for the sufferings of its inhabitants induced him to refrain from reaping the fruits of victory. As a skilful general and a gallant soldier in the defence of his own country, he is above all praise. As a chivalrous Rajput braving all consequences when called upon to save the honour of a woman, he is without a parallel. As an accomplished prince and a benevolent man with a taste for art and a solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, he stands out pre-eminent amongst his contemporaries. His liberality, good sense and kingly virtues made his reign one of the most glorious epochs in the history of Mewar.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

Rama—the legendary king of Ayodhya and hero of the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*.

Rama was a descendant of Raghu whose ancestry was traced to the sun-god. The ruling dynasty of Mewar, which was linked with Rama was therefore described as *Raghuvamsi* (lit., 'of the line of Raghu') and also as *Suryavamsi* (lit., 'of the solar line').

Sisodiya—title of the royal dynasty of Chitor since the 14th century.

Barnagar—a town identified with the modern Vadnagar in the Bombay Presidency.

Yalabhipura—identified with the modern town of Wala near Bhaunagar.

'barbarians'—this word was used by the Aryans in India to describe foreign races who from time to time invaded this country and whose habits and manners were so different from theirs.

Amba-Bhavani—*Amba* means 'mother', and *Bhavani* is the name of a goddess

Goha—from the Sanskrit *guha*, a cave. The generic name of the royal dynasty of Udaipur changed from *Suryavamsi* to Ghelote (or Guhilot) when Goha was its head. It changed next to Ahariya when the dynasty first settled at Ahar, the valley of Udaipur. It was transformed subsequently into Sisodiya, from the village named Sisoda where an ancestor of Rana Hamir resided for some time.

Idar—a small state which lay to the north of the modern Ahmedabad in the Bombay Presidency. Its capital also bore the same name

Bhil—name of an aboriginal tribe, probably Dravidian in origin.

Bappa—the word is derived from the Prakrit *bappa*, 'father.' Some think that the word 'Bappa' is not a proper name at all, but a mere title. Bappa is identified with Khuman as well as with Kalbhoja, early chiefs of Mewar.

Bhander—the old name of a place in the wild regions of the present Gwalior State.

Parasar—the old name of a place near the modern Udaipur.

Nagda—its old name was Nagahrida. Nagda is still a place of religious resort, about ten miles to the north of Udaipur.

Siva—the Hindu god of destruction.

linked their saris—during a Hindu marriage the scarf (*sari*) of the bride is tied to the garment of the bridegroom.

Mori—the old name of a section of the Paramara clan. The Morya or Maurya sub-clan still exists.

Paramara—a Rajput clan the mythical progenitor of which is said to have come into existence from *Agnikunda*, or sacrificial fire-pit. Parihara, Chalukya or Solanki and Chauhan are the names of the three other Rajput tribes which are also regarded as having the same origin.

Samantas—subordinate chiefs.

Agni-upasi Suryavamsi—sun-born fire-worshipper. *Agni* was the source of the Paramara clan from which Bappa was descended through his mother. This might be the reason why Bappa's descendants worshipped fire. *Suryavamsi* refers to Bappa's descent from the solar dynasty of Ayodhya.

Khorasan—a province of Persia to the west of Afghanistan.

Kafiristan—a tract of country between Chitral and the Afghan territory, south of the Hindu-Kush.

Irak—the name of a tract which formerly included parts of Mesopotamia and Persia.

Iran—the ancient name of Persia.

Turan—the ancient name of a country beyond the Oxus.

Meru—a towering mountain often mentioned in Hindu cosmology.

CHAPTER II

Kanauj—an abbreviation of Kanyakubja, the name of an ancient Hindu kingdom in northern India.

Anhilwara Patan—the capital of an ancient Hindu kingdom. It has been identified with the modern town of Patan, situated in the State of Baroda in western India.

Ghaggar—a river in the Ambala district. It was once a tributary of the Indus, but is now dry except in the rains. On it once stood Tarain where two battles were fought between Muhammad Ghori and Prithwiraj.

Tomara—a Rajput tribe to which some of the Hindu kings of Delhi belonged.

Chauhan—see the note on 'Paramara.'

Shihabu-d-din—a title of Muhammad Ghori, Sultan of Ghazni and conqueror of Hindusthan. Another title is Muizzu-d-din.

Regent of Mahadeva—the English translation of *Eklingska diwan*.

Ulysses—the legendary hero of ancient Greece, who was reputed for his sagacity and courage.

waves of the Ganges—Ghori defeated in 1194 A. D. a large Hindu army led by Jaichand at Chandrawar (in the modern Etwa district) near the Jumna (not the Ganges). Jaichand was slain in this battle.

Britons—the old inhabitants of Britain who were pagans till their conversion to Christianity under Roman rule. They were conquered first by the Romans and then gradually by the Jutes, the Saxons and the Angles who came to England from the northern part of Germany.

Danes—inhabitants of Scandinavia and Denmark who repeatedly attacked England and settled in the northern and eastern parts of it in the ninth century.

Normans—people of Normandy in France, who conquered England under William.

Chalukya—see the note on 'Paramara.'

Rathor—an important Rajput tribe to which Jaichand of Kanauj is said to have belonged.

Kutbu-d-din—a native of Turkestan who had been bought as a slave, and rose in the service of Muhammad Ghori. He was the viceroy of Ghori at Delhi after the defeat of Prithwiraj, and was the founder of the Slave dynasty.

Tartar—a native of Tartary, i. e., Turkestan in Central Asia. Turks and Mughals who were of the Mongolian race, were called Tartars, because they were originally inhabitants of Tartary.

CHAPTER III

guardian-goddess of Chitor—goddess presiding over, and controlling, the destiny of Chitor.

the umbrella—the white umbrella was the insignia of royalty in India. Tod thinks the royal umbrella in Mewar was red.

johar—self-immolation, by burning, of large numbers of Rajput women, resorted to as a means of escape from captivity and dishonour.

Kelwara—a town situated in the heart of the Aravalli mountains in the west of Mewar.

Jalor—a small state situated to the west of Mewar. Its rulers belonged to the Songira section of the Chauhan clan.

CHAPTER IV

attained 'one hundred years'—died.

Chandano tribe—one of the branches of the Chauhan clan

tika—the red mark put on the forehead of a Hindu king at the time of his installation.

The knot.....united—the tying of the garments of the bride and the bridegroom and the joining of their hands, are parts of the ceremony of Hindu marriage.

the child.....shrine—the belief is common in India that diseases may be cured through the grace of the deity if the diseased persons are brought within the precincts of the temple and a votive offering is made to him

'standard of the sun'—a sun of gold in the centre of a disc of black ostrich-feathers, is depicted on the royal standard of Mewar.

Muslim states.....Delhi—Alau-d-din was the first Sultan of Delhi to annex the Hindu kingdoms of Gujarat and Malwa. Their Muslim governors declared their independence about the beginning of the fifteenth century. The reference here is to the greatness of Mewar under Kumbha and Sanga.

CHAPTER V

'expel.....Gaya'—it is not very likely that a Rajput king should have come all the way from western India to Bihar in those days to fight for the protection of a temple.

Installation—the inauguration of the prince as heir-apparent (*yuvaraj*) during the lifetime of the king.

queen-mother—the widowed mother of Mokal, the young Rana.

Mandor—the old capital of Marwar. The next capital was Jodhpur, established by Jodha in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Mandu—capital of Malwa, a Muslim state. See the last note under Chapter IV.

Maru-desh—*maru* in Sanskrit means 'a desert,' and *desh* means 'a country.' Marwar is a part of the desert in Rajputana, and its name is connected with word *maru*.

Aherias—*Aheria* was a hunting festival in Rajputana. *Aherias* were huntsmen.

'stranger's fare'—the guest (*atithi*) was honoured and sumptuously fed by Hindus in ancient times. The practice still exists though in a restricted form.

one chief of Mandor—Rao Ranmall.

abjure 'his turban.....bed'—give himself no rest.

'renown.....lotus'—the *expansion* of renown is compared to the blossoming of the lotus. The reference is to the elaboration of the virtues of the chiefs by the bards.

'name.....tree'—the brothers being the sons of a carpenter's daughter, they were more likely to be familiar with the names of trees than others.

'covering his face'—due to a feeling of shame.

superb omen—amongst hunters the success of the first throw or of the first shot was regarded as auspicious.

triumphal pillar—Kumbha's *Jaistambha* still exists, and is magnificent and very famous. It is also referred to as the Tower of Victory.

'Divine Melodies'—the celebrated *Gita-Govindam* of the Bengali poet Jaidev. It has been translated into English as the *Indian Song of Songs* by Sir Edwin Arnold.

her hymns—the *bhajan* songs of Mira.

Kamalmer—the name of a hill with an ancient castle. Rana Kumbha built on it a stupendous fort which was almost impregnable. It was named, after him, Kumbhalmer.

Jhalani—daughter of the chief of Jhalawar, belonging to the Jhala tribe. After marriage, a woman was known in her husband's family by the name of the tribe to which her father belonged.

divan—audience-hall, i.e., a hall where the court or the *darbar* was held.

CHAPTER VI

Uda—an abbreviation of Udai.

kusumbha—a preparation of opium.

Nahra Magra—a hill about ten miles to the east of Udaipur. The expression literally means the 'tiger's mount.'

twins of Rome—Romulus and Remus. There being a dispute between them about the site where the city was to be built, they decided to follow the omen to be given by a flight of birds. Incensed with a remark of Remus, Romulus later killed him.

Srinagar—a place about ten miles to the south-east of Ajmer.

'snake.....head'—this is looked upon in India as a very auspicious omen, betokening the elevation of a man to the royal throne.

panther-hide—in Sanskrit the royal throne is called *singhasana*, which means the 'lion-seat.' Ascetics sometimes have their seats on the hide of the tiger, the lion or the panther, and they too are called *Maharajas*.

Tonk-Toda—this is to be distinguished from Toda-Bhim, referred to in Chapter XI.

anniversary **Ali**—the Muslim festival of *Muharram*.

Gambhir—a river near Chitor.

Diwanji—the Rana, who was called the 'Diwan of Eklingsa.'

'**pan** **leave**—the betel-leaf compound sometimes contained poisons and was offered to enemies to get rid of them.

gharis—periods of twenty-two minutes each.

'**as much land** **point** '—this is taken from a speech of Duryodhana in the Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata*.

Surja—an abbreviation of Surajmall.

make them **king**—grant them to Brahmins. Grants to Brahmins were irresumable by the king.

Deolia—a place in Pratabgarh State. It was not Surajmall but his great-grandson Bika who really founded Deolia.

ahdy literally, 'single, alone.' An *ahdy* was a gentleman trooper who did not attach himself to any chief.

You are **lands** '—this is ironical. Raimall probably refers to the defeat and death of the petty Mina king at the hands of Prithwiraj, and means to say that if he desires to retain his own crown, he must not offend the powerful Sultan of Malwa.

Sirohi—a kingdom situated to the west of Mewar.

CHAPTER VII

kalas—a Sanskrit word which means 'an urn' or 'a pitcher.' It is sometimes put on the pinnacle of a building. Rana Sanga was looked upon as the greatest of the kings of Mewar.

Rawal, Rawat, Rao—these words have all the same meaning, and signify 'a ruler' or 'a prince.' *Rawal* is derived from the Sanskrit *Rajakula*, *Rao* from *Raja* and *Rawat* from *Rajaputra*.

Bayana—a district to the north of Mewar.

Usbeks—a section of the Mughals.

Indraprastha—the capital of an early Hindu kingdom in northern India. Muslim Sultans built Delhi on its ruins.

Mughal—this word is connected with the word 'Mongol,' the name of a race which had its original home in Mongolia.

Ferghana—a province of Turkestan.

Samarkand—now a province of Russian Turkestan.

Jaxartes—a river now called Sir Daria which rises from the hills to the north of the Pamirs and flows into the Sea of Aral.

Ibrahim Lodi—a Sultan of the Lodi dynasty of Delhi, who was defeated by Babur at the first battle of Panipat in 1526. Ibrahim lost his life in this battle.

Khanua—Khanua or Kanwaha is a village almost due west from Agra and now in the Bharatpur State. Here Babur defeated the Rajputs under Rana Sanga on the sixteenth March, 1527.

Mars—a planet fourth in order of distance from the sun.

Jemadi—fifth month of the Muslim lunar year, called *Jemdi-al-awwal*.

Asas—the name of a chief under Babur.

Baba Dost—the name of another chief under Babur.

Amir—also spelt as *Ameer*, an Arabic word meaning 'a commander;' hence 'a noble.' It is also used as the title of the rulers of Afghanistan.

his memoirs—an account of the events of his life written by Babur himself originally in the Turki language and translated into Persian subsequently. The English translation by Mrs. Beveridge is very accurate.

Koran—the Holy Book of Islam.

Ghazi—an Arabic word meaning 'a fighter against non-Muslims.'

Ranthambhor—a fortress to the north of Mewar.

the proxy—one who acts for another as a substitute or

deputy. In mediæval times there was a custom amongst the Rajputs, according to which the bridegroom sent a proxy to represent him at the ceremony of marriage at the house of the bride. When it was over, the bride was sent to the bridegroom's place.

Hara—name of a sub-section of the Chauhan tribe.

Bundi—a state to the east of Mewar.

changī—the royal banner of Mewar with the golden sun embroidered in the centre of a disc of black ostrich-feathers or felt, elevated on a pole and carried close to the Rana. The word is probably derived from the Persian *chang*, 'anything bent.'

saffron robe—yellow dress worn by Rajput warriors before a desperate battle in which they meant to sacrifice their lives.

'we have had.....fruit'—the insults hitherto offered to us are as nothing in comparison with what is to follow.

'To-morrow.....known'—the punishment for the insults would be visited on the Rana on the next day.

CHAPTER VIII

Bari—the duty of the *Bari* is the making of leaf-platters from which Hindus eat. He is also a domestic servant.

Vaishya—a member of the trading class.

'no threats.....relinquish'—this shows the determination of the prince.

Kotharia Chauhan—chief belonging to the Chauhan clan, holding the fief of Kotharia in the west of Mewar. The fief was created by Rana Sanga.

Isani—the consort of the Hindu god Siva.

'farewell to Kamalmer'—the local expression is *Kumbhalmer bidaona*.

Maldev—the Rathor ruler of Jodhpur who fought bravely against Sher Shah and also against Akbar. But he had to sue Akbar for peace after the latter had stormed one of his important cities.

Ancient patrimony—i.e. the Kingdom of Ferghana.

Tansoxiana—a province beyond the river Oxus

Sirhind—a place in the Punjab where Humayun defeated Sikandar Shah, the last Pathan Sultan of Delhi, in 1555.

Bairam—the Mughal general who was the guardian of Akbar during his minority. He was dismissed by Akbar on account of his domineering nature.

cooped up—Udai had to be concealed in the fort of Kamalmer during his childhood on account of the attempts of Banbir to murder him.

Abu-l Fazi—a courtier of Akbar and a historian. He was the author of the *Ain-i-Akbari* and the *Akbarnamah*.

'great ancients'—old chiefs who were celebrated for their courage and wisdom. The local expression is *bara burha*.

Akbar ka diwa—Akbar's lamp.

noble scion.....stem—Baghji was the son of Surajmall who was a Sisodiya and a grandson of Rana Mokai. But Surajmall had left Mewar, and his great-grandson founded a new kingdom at Deoha.

kangras—battlements.

Chundawat—a sub-clan descended from the Sisodiya prince Chunda

'gate of the sun'—a gate of the fort of Chitor, which was locally named *Surajpol*.

Bedla—an estate near Udaipur city, held by the second senior noble of Mewar.

'sons of Sanga'—the Sangawats, a sub-division of the Chundawat clan. They were not the descendants of Rana Sanga.

Bijolia—a fief under Mewar.

Jhala—name of a tribe.

Sadri—another fief under Mewar.

Badnor—a fief in the north of Mewar.

Kelwa—a fief situated in the west of Mewar in the midst of the Aravalli hills.

Spartan mother—one is said to have asked her son to return victorious from the battle-field or not at all.

last bira—the leaf of *pan* with spices is presented to guests when taking leave.

'the yellow mantle'—see the note on 'saffron robe.'

cordon of distinction—the sacred thread worn by members of the twice-born classes in India.

Marble Statues—removed later to Delhi.

CHAPTER IX

'to make.....resplendent'—to heighten the glory of his mother or motherland; to prove himself a worthy descendant of his ancestors.

Delwara—a fief in the west of Mewar.

pattras—leaves of trees, stitched together and used in place of plates for taking meals from.

nakkaras—kettle-drums.

Gogunda—the mountain-pass of Haldighat led to the fort of Gogunda about 16 miles to the north-west of Udaipur city.

the Banas and the Berach—two rivers in Mewar, which unite and ultimately meet the Chambal.

babul—the acacia tree.

Untala—a village about 25 miles to the north of Udaipur.

'the garden of Rajasthan'—i.e., Mewar.

Amber—the old name of the present Jaipur State in Rajputana.

Jaisalmer—a state situated in the western part of the desert in Rajputana.

Parvez—the second son of the Emperor Jahangir.

satraps—provincial governors.

Kandhar—it should not be confused with Kandahar in Afghanistan. Kandhar is a place to the north of Mewar, near Bayana.

degradation—inter-marriage between Rajputs and Muslims of the highest classes occasionally took place and was

considered objectionable except by a very few, of whom Rana Pratap was one.

Dhar—capital of the ancient Hindu kingdom of Malwa.

the former re-united—Kabul was once under Humayun, but it was governed after his death in practical independence on behalf of Akbar's step-brother, till Man Singh reconquered it for Akbar.

Annadeva—literally, 'the god of food.' Before commencing a meal, caste Hindus make an offering of a portion of it to gods. Probably Tod refers to this practice.

Salim—the eldest son of Akbar, known afterwards as the Emperor Jahangir. It has been pointed out that Salim could not have been the commander of the Mughal army at Haldighat in 1576, as he was then only seven years old.

Mahabat Khan—a most daring commander under Akbar and Jahangir. He is believed by some to have been a born Rajput. In reality however he was a Muslim of Kabul. His former name was Jamana Beg.

'crimson banner'—reference is to the sun of gold on the royal standard of Mewar.

howda—a seat fixed on the back of an elephant.

Haldighat—Muslim historians refer to the battle of Haldighat as that of Gogunda.

'blue horse'—blue was probably the colour of the caparison. A horse is never blue.

Jawara—a village in the south of Mewar.

The Khan Khanan—title of Mirza Khan, the son of Bairam Khan and a great noble of Akbar's court and sometime governor of Gujarat.

Troubadour—lyric poet of a class originating in Provence in France in the 11th century. Knights in France also practised verse-making.

Khatri—an abbreviation of Kshatriya.

he surely overcome—i.e. by death.

Shahbaz—a Mughal general. **Abdulla**—another Mughal general.

Dawer—a pass in the Aravalli to the north of Udaipur.

Mandalgarh—a fort in a district in the north of Mewar. The fort was built in the middle of the twelfth century.

Chundawat.....**daughter**—the mother of Putta, who during the siege of Chitor by Akbar, led her daughter-in-law to the battle-field where they were both killed

Lake Pichola—a lake in the western part of Mewar on which stands the capital Udaipur. The lake of Udai Sagar is 8 miles to the east of this city.

Thermopylæ—a mountain-pass where the Greeks under the Spartan King, Leonidas, were defeated by the Persians under King Xerxes in 480 B.C.

Marathon—the battle-field where the Greeks under Miltiades defeated a large Persian army sent by King Darius in 490 B.C.

CHAPTER X

firman—a Persian word meaning an edict or decree of the sovereign.

' **preferring** **pomp** '—quoted from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II.

' **the slave of the carpet** '—one of the small brass ornaments placed at the corners of the carpet on the floor to keep it steady.

' **your late sovereign** '—i.e., the departed Pratap Singh.

Bhairon—the god of battle. **harawal**—vanguard.

Khamnor—a pass of the Aravalli.

' **might of their hills** '—valiant soldiers residing in the mountainous regions of the Aravalli.

' **rather**.....**at all** '—quoted from *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II.

ninth year—ninth year of the reign of Jahangir. This year commenced on the 21st of March, 1614.

Alam Guman—literally, 'arrogant of the earth.'

Bahman—eleventh solar month. The solar year is current only in Persia amongst Muslims.

khilat—an Arabic word meaning 'a robe of honour.'

sarupa—dresses. **khapwa**—daggers.

Khurram—he is believed by some to have been the son of a Rajput princess of Amber (whose name, according to one historian, was Balmati) of the Kachhwaha tribe. *Kachhwa* is a synonym of *kurma*, a tortoise. Hence the prince was named Khurram. According to Vincent Smith, the prince was the son of a princess of Marwar.

'The custom.....came together'—this was intended to avoid the possibility of assassination of the father and the son together through treachery.

'gave Karnajagir'—the word *jagir* implies that the Rana of Mewar was no longer regarded as an independent king, but was looked upon as a mere landholder under the Emperor.

Muharram—the month during which falls the anniversary of the tragedy of Kerbala. The first month of the lunar year of the Muslims.

Rabiul-Akhir—the fourth lunar month of the Muslims.

'salvo'—saving clause, reservation.

'abdicate.....son'—the story of Amar's abdication is not satisfactorily confirmed.

CHAPTER XI

the crescent—figure shaped like the new or old moon, appearing on the Turkish standard. The palace was Jagmandir.

caryatids—female figures used as pillars.

'the debt.....gratitude'—from *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV.

Madar—a Muslim holy man who came from Aleppo originally. His tomb is still to be seen at Makanpur in the Cawnpur district.

the turban of Prince Khurram—an exchange of turbans amongst friends indicates great intimacy.

the ambassador of England—Sir Thomas Roe who was sent as an ambassador to the court of Jahangir by James the First of England. He pays a tribute to Jagat Singh in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Jagmandir—occupied by Khurram.

medallion—decorative tablet shaped like a medal.

gypsum—a mineral from which plaster of Paris is prepared.

khirni—the Latin name of the tree is *wrightia tinctoria*.

opiate—a drug containing opium; the effect of such a drug.

CHAPTER XII

The constellations.....at night—this was regarded as very ominous.

'Chaturbarnas'—the four castes amongst Hindus, viz., Brahmins, Kshattriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

Fatehabad—a town 21 miles to the south-east of Agra, originally named Zafarnagar, but later called Fatehabad by Aurangzeb after his victory over Dara in 1658 during the war of succession.

jizya—a poll-tax on non-Muslims.

followers of Jesus, of Moses—Christians or Jews.

Joghies—those who are given to contemplation or practise what is called *hatha-yoga*.

Berawghies—those who have renounced the world. There are religious orders amongst the Hindus which are thus described.

Sanyasis—anchorites or hermits.

Pagan—heathen; one who does not believe in Christianity or a revealed religion; idolater.

Ram Singh—son of Jai Singh, the Raja of Amber and his successor on the throne.

Rupnagar—a fief under the Rana of Mewar.

Solanki—derived from the term 'Chalukya.'

Hindupat—leader or king of the Hindus.

the Franks—'Frank' means one of the Germanic nation that conquered France in the fifth century A.D. Here it means a person of European origin.

Sambhaji—son and successor of Sivaji.
